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Section

ALCIPHRON:

OR, THE

MINUTE PHILOSOPHER.

IN

SEVEN DIALOGUES.

Containing an APOLOGY *for the* Christian Religion, *against those who are called* Free-thinkers.

VOLUME *the* SECOND.

George Berkeley

The Balances of Deceit are in his Hand. Hosea. xii. 7.
Τὸ ἐξαπατᾶσθαι αὐτὸν ὑφ' αὑτοῦ πάντων χαλεπώτατον. Plato.

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THE MINUTE PHILOSOPHER.

THE SIXTH DIALOGUE.

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of the Son of God. XVI. *Ignorance of the divine Oeconomy, a Source of Difficulties.* XVII. *Wisdom of God, Foolishness to Man.* XVIII. *Reason, no blind Guide.* XIX. *Usefulness of Divine Revelation.* XX. *Prophecies, whence obscure.* XXI. *Eastern Accounts of Time older than the* Mosaic. XXII. *The Humour of* Ægyptians, Assyrians, Chaldeans, *and other Nations extending their Antiquity beyond Truth, accounted for.* XXIII. *Reasons confirming the* Mosaic *Account.* XXIV. *Profane Historians inconsistent.* XXV. Celsus, Porphyry, *and* Julian. XXVI. *The Testimony of* Josephus *considered.* XXVII. *Attestation of Jews and Gentiles to Christianity.* XXVIII. *Forgeries and Heresies.* XXIX. *Judgment and Attention of Minute Philosophers.* XXX. *Faith and Miracles.* XXXI. *Probable Arguments a sufficient Ground of Faith.* XXXII. *The Christian Religion able to stand the Test of rational Inquiry.*

I. THE following Day being Sunday, our Philosophers lay long in Bed, while the rest of us went to Church in the neighbouring Town, where we dined at *Euphranor*'s, and after Evening

ing Service returned to the two Philoſo- DIAL.
phers, whom we found in the Library. VI.
They told us, That, if there was a God, he was preſent every where, as well as at Church; and that if we had been ſerving him one way, they did not neglect to do as much another; inaſmuch as a free Exerciſe of Reaſon muſt be allowed the moſt acceptable Service and Worſhip, that a rational Creature can offer to its Creator. However, ſaid *Alciphron*, if you, Gentlemen, can but ſolve the Difficulties which I ſhall propoſe tomorrow Morning, I promiſe to go to Church next Sunday. After ſome general Converſation of this Kind, we ſate down to a light Supper, and the next Morning aſſembled at the ſame Place as the Day before: where being all ſeated, I obſerved, that the foregoing Week our Conferences had been carried on for a longer Time, and with leſs Interruption than I had ever known, or well could be, in Town: where Mens Hours are ſo broken by Viſits, Buſineſs, and Amuſements, that whoever is content to form his Notions from Converſation only, muſt needs have them very ſhattered and imperfect. And what have we got, replied *Alciphron*, by all theſe continued Conferences? For my part, I think my ſelf juſt where I was,

DIAL. VI. with reſpect to the main Point that divides us, the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion. I anſwered: That ſo many Points had been examined, diſcuſſed, and agreed between him and his Adverſaries, that I hoped to ſee them come to an intire Agreement in the end. For in the firſt Place, ſaid I, the Principles and Opinions of thoſe who are called Free-thinkers, or Minute Philoſophers, have been pretty clearly explained. It hath been alſo agreed, That Vice is not of that Benefit to the Nation, which ſome Men imagine: That Virtue is highly uſeful to Mankind: But that the Beauty of Virtue is not alone ſufficient to engage them in the Practice of it: That therefore the Belief of a God and Providence ought to be encouraged in the State, and tolerated in good Company, as a uſeful Notion. Further, it hath been proved that there is a God: That it is reaſonable to worſhip him: And that the Worſhip, Faith, and Principles preſcribed by the Chriſtian Religion have a uſeful Tendency. Admit, replied *Alciphron*, addreſſing himſelf to *Crito*, all that *Dion* ſaith to be true: Yet this doth not hinder my being juſt where I was, with reſpect to the main Point. Since there is nothing in all this that proves the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion: Though each of thoſe Par-

Particulars enumerated may, perhaps, pre- DIAL.
judice in its favour. I am therefore to VI.
ſuſpect my ſelf at preſent for a prejudiced
Perſon; prejudiced, I ſay, in favour of Chriſtianity. This, as I am a Lover of Truth, puts me upon my Guard againſt Deception. I muſt therefore look ſharp, and well conſider every Step I take.

II. *CRI.* You may remember, *Alciphron*, you propoſed for the Subject of our preſent Conference the Conſideration of certain Difficulties and Objections, which you had to offer againſt the Chriſtian Religion. We are now ready to hear and conſider whatever you ſhall think fit to produce of that Kind. Atheiſm, and a wrong Notion of Chriſtianity, as of ſomething hurtful to Mankind, are great Prejudices; the Removal of which may diſpoſe a Man to argue with Candor, and ſubmit to reaſonable Proof: But the removing Prejudices againſt an Opinion, is not to be reckoned prejudicing in its favour. It may be hoped therefore, that you will be able to do juſtice to your Cauſe, without being fond of it. *ALC.* O *Crito!* that Man may thank his Stars to whom Nature hath given a ſublime Soul, who can raiſe himſelf above popular Opinions, and, looking down on the Herd of Man-

DIAL. VI. kind, behold them ſcattered over the Surface of the whole Earth, divided and ſubdivided into numberleſs Nations and Tribes, differing in Notions and Tenets, as in Language, Manners, and Dreſs. The Man who takes a general View of the World and its Inhabitants, from this lofty Stand, above the Reach of Prejudice, ſeems to breathe a purer Air, and to ſee by a clearer Light: But how to impart this clear and extenſive View to thoſe who are wandering beneath in the narrow dark Paths of Error! This indeed is a hard Task: yet, hard as it is, I ſhall try if by any means,

Clara tuæ poſſim præpandere lumina menti.

Lucret.

Know then, that all the various Caſts or Sects of the Sons of Men have each their Faith, and their religious Syſtem, germinating and ſprouting forth from that common Grain of Enthuſiaſm, which is an original Ingredient in the Compoſition of Humane Nature. They ſhall each tell of Intercourſe with the inviſible World, Revelations from Heaven, divine Oracles, and the like. All which Pretenſions, when I regard with an impartial Eye, it is impoſſible I ſhould aſſent to all, and I find within

within my self something that withholds me from assenting to any of them. For although I may be willing to follow, so far as common Sense and the Light of Nature lead; yet the same Reason, that bids me yield to rational Proof, forbids me to admit Opinions without Proof. This holds in general against all Revelations whatsoever. And be this my first Objection against the Christian in particular. *CRI.* As this Objection supposes there is no Proof or Reason for believing the Christian Revelation; if good Reason can be assigned for such Belief, it comes to nothing. Now I presume you will grant, the Authority of the Reporter is a true and proper Reason for believing Reports: And the better this Authority, the juster Claim it hath to our Assent: But the Authority of God is on all Accounts the best: Whatever therefore comes from God, it is most reasonable to believe. DIAL. VI.

III. *ALC.* This I grant, but then it must be proved to come from God. *CRI.* And are not Miracles, and the Accomplishments of Prophecies, joined with the Excellency of its Doctrine, a sufficient Proof that the Christian Religion came from God? *ALC.* Miracles, indeed, would prove something: But what Proof have

DIAL. VI. we of these Miracles? *CRI.* Proof of the same Kind that we have or can have of any Facts done a great way off, and a long time ago. We have authentic Accounts transmitted down to us from Eye-Witnesses, whom we cannot conceive tempted to impose upon us by any Humane Motive whatsoever: inasmuch as they acted therein contrary to their Interests, their Prejudices, and the very Principles in which they had been nursed and educated. These Accounts were confirmed by the unparallel'd Subversion of the City of *Jerusalem*, and the Dispersion of the *Jewish* Nation, which is a standing Testimony to the Truth of the Gospel, particularly of the Predictions of our Blessed Saviour. These Accounts, within less than a Century, were spread throughout the World, and believed by great numbers of People. These same Accounts were committed to Writing, translated into several Languages, and handed down with the same Respect and Consent of Christians in the most distant Churches. Do you not see, said *Alciphron*, staring full at *Crito*, that all this hangs by Tradition? And Tradition, take my Word for it, gives but a weak Hold: It is a Chain, whereof the first Links may be stronger than Steel, and yet the

the laſt weak as Wax, and brittle as Glaſs. Imagine a Picture copied ſucceſſively by an hundred Painters, one from another; how like muſt the laſt Copy be to the Original! How lively and diſtinct will an Image be, after an hundred Reflexions between two parallel Mirrours! Thus like, and thus lively do I think a faint vaniſhing Tradition, at the End of ſixteen or ſeventeen hundred Years. Some Men have a falſe Heart, others a wrong Head: and where both are true, the Memory may be treacherous. Hence there is ſtill ſomething added, ſomething omitted, and ſomething varied from the Truth: And the Sum of many ſuch Additions, Deductions, and Alterations, accumulated for ſeveral Ages, doth, at the Foot of the Account, make quite another Thing. *CRI.* Ancient Facts we may know by Tradition, oral or written: And this latter we may divide into two Kinds, private and public, as Writings are kept in the Hands of particular Men, or recorded in public Archives. Now all theſe three Sorts of Tradition, for ought I can ſee, concur to atteſt the genuine Antiquity of the Goſpels. And they are ſtrengthened by collateral Evidence from Rites inſtituted, Feſtivals obſerved, and Monuments erected by ancient Chriſtians, ſuch as Churches,

DIAL. VI.

DIAL. VI. Churches, Baptiſteries, and Sepulchres. Now, allowing your Objection holds againſt oral Tradition, ſingly taken, yet I can think it no ſuch difficult Thing to tranſcribe faithfully. And Things once committed to Writing, are ſecure from Slips of Memory, and may with common Care be preſerved intire ſo long as the Manuſcript laſts: And this, Experience ſhews may be above a thouſand Years. The *Alexandrine* Manuſcript is allowed to be above twelve hundred Years old: and it is highly probable there were then extant Copies four hundred Years old. A Tradition, therefore, of above ſixteen hundred Years, need have only two or three Links in its Chain. And theſe Links, notwithſtanding that great length of Time, may be very ſound and intire. Since no reaſonable Man will deny, that an ancient Manuſcript may be of much the ſame Credit now, as when it was firſt written. We have it on good Authority, and it ſeems probable, that the primitive Chriſtians were careful to tranſcribe Copies of the Goſpels and Epiſtles for their private Uſe: and that other Copies were preſerved as public Records, in the ſeveral Churches throughout the World: and that Portions thereof were conſtantly read in their Aſſemblies. Can more be ſaid to

prove

prove the Writings of Claſſic Authors, or ancient Records of any kind authentic? *Alciphron*, addreſſing his Diſcourſe to *Euphranor*, ſaid, It is one Thing to ſilence an Adverſary, and another to convince him. What do you think, *Euphranor*? *EUPH.* Doubtleſs it is. *ALC.* But what I want, is to be convinced. *EUPH.* That Point is not ſo clear. *ALC.* But if a Man had ever ſo much mind, he cannot be convinced by probable Arguments againſt Demonſtration. *EUPH.* I grant he cannot. DIAL. VI.

IV. *ALC.* Now it is as evident as Demonſtration can make it, that no Divine Faith can poſſibly be built upon Tradition. Suppoſe an honeſt credulous Countryman catechiſed and lectured every Sunday by his Pariſh-Prieſt: It is plain he believes in the Parſon, and not in God. He knows nothing of Revelations, and Doctrines, and Miracles, but what the Prieſt tells him. This he believes, and this Faith is purely humane. If you ſay he has the Liturgy and the Bible for the Foundation of his Faith, the Difficulty ſtill recurs. For as to the Liturgy, he pins his Faith upon the civil Magiſtrate, as well as the Eccleſiaſtic: neither of which can pretend Divine Inſpiration.

DIAL. VI. Then for the Bible, he takes both that and his Prayer-Book on Truſt from the Printer, who, he believes, made true Editions from true Copies. You ſee then Faith, but what Faith? Faith in the Prieſt, in the Magiſtrate, in the Printer, Editor, Tranſcriber, none of which can with any Pretence be called Divine. I had the Hint from *Cratylus*: it is a Shaft out of his Quiver, and, believe me, a keen one. *EUPH.* Let me take and make trial of this ſame Shaft in my Hands. Suppoſe then your Countryman hears a Magiſtrate declare the Law from the Bench, or ſuppoſe he reads it in a Statute Book. What think you, is the Printer or the Juſtice the true and proper Object of his Faith and Submiſſion? Or do you acknowledge a higher Authority whereon to found thoſe loyal Acts, and in which they do really terminate? Again, ſuppoſe you read a Paſſage in *Tacitus* that you believe true; would you ſay you aſſented to it on the Authority of the Printer or Tranſcriber rather than the Hiſtorian? *ALC.* Perhaps I would, and perhaps I would not. I do not think my ſelf obliged to anſwer theſe Points. What is this but transferring the Queſtion from one Subject to another? That which we conſidered was neither Law nor profane Hiſtory,

Hiſtory, but religious Tradition, and Di- DIAL.
vine Faith. I ſee plainly what you aim VI.
at, but ſhall never take for an Anſwer
to one Difficulty, the ſtarting of another.
CRI. O *Alciphron*, there is no taking hold of you who expect that others ſhould (as you were pleaſed to expreſs it) hold fair and ſtand firm, while you plucked out their Prejudices: How ſhall he argue with you but from your Conceſſions, and how can he know what you grant except you will be pleaſed to tell him? *EUPH.* But to ſave you the Trouble, for once I will ſuppoſe an Anſwer. My Queſtion admits but of two Anſwers: take your Choice. From the one it will follow, that by a Parity of Reaſon we can eaſily conceive, how a Man may have Divine Faith, though he never felt Inſpiration or ſaw a Miracle: inaſmuch as it is equally poſſible for the Mind, through whatever Conduit, oral or ſcriptural, Divine Revelation be derived, to carry its Thought and Submiſſion up to the Source, and terminate its Faith, not in Humane but Divine Authority: not in the Inſtrument or Veſſel of Conveyance, but in the great Origin it ſelf as its proper and true Object. From the other Anſwer it will follow, that you introduce a general Scepticiſm into Humane Knowledge, and break down the Hinges

DIAL. VI. Hinges on which civil Government, and all the Affairs of the World turn and depend: in a Word that you would deſtroy Humane Faith to get rid of Divine. And how this agrees with your profeſſing that you want to be convinced, I leave you to conſider.

V. *ALC.* I ſhould in earneſt be glad to be convinced one Way or other, and come to ſome Concluſion. But I have ſo many Objections in ſtore, you are not to count much upon getting over one. Depend on it you ſhall find me behave like a Gentleman and Lover of Truth. I will propoſe my Objections briefly and plainly, and accept of reaſonable Anſwers as faſt as you can give them. Come, *Euphranor*, make the moſt of your Tradition: you can never make that a conſtant and univerſal one, which is acknowledged to have been unknown, or at beſt diſputed in the Church for ſeveral Ages: And this is the Caſe of the Canon of the New Teſtament. For though we have now a Canon, as they call it, ſettled; yet every one muſt ſee and own that Tradition cannot grow ſtronger by Age; and that what was uncertain in the primitive Times cannot be undoubted in the ſubſequent. What ſay you to this, *Euphranor?* *EUPH.* I ſhould be

be glad to conceive your Meaning clearly before I return an Anſwer. It ſeems to me this Objection of yours ſuppoſeth that where a Tradition hath been conſtant and undiſputed, ſuch Tradition may be admitted as a Proof; but that where the Tradition is defective, the Proof muſt be ſo too. Is this your Meaning? *ALC.* It is. *EUPH.* Conſequently the Goſpels and Epiſtles of Saint *Paul*, which were univerſally received in the Beginning, and never ſince doubted of by the Church, muſt, notwithſtanding this Objection, be in reaſon admitted for genuine. And if theſe Books contain, as they really do, all thoſe Points that come into Controverſy between you and me; what need I diſpute with you about the Authority of ſome other Books of the New Teſtament, which came later to be generally known and received in the Church? If a Man aſſents to the undiſputed Books he is no longer an Infidel: though he ſhould not hold the Revelations, or the Epiſtle of Saint *James* or *Jude*, or the latter of Saint *Paul*, or the two laſt of Saint *John* to be Canonical. The additional Authority of theſe Portions of Holy Scripture may have its Weight, in particular Controverſies between Chriſtians, but can add nothing to Arguments againſt an Infidel as ſuch.

DIAL. VI. such. Wherefore, though I believe a subsequent Age might clear up what was obscure or dubious in a Foregoing, and that good Reasons may be assigned for receiving these Books, yet those Reasons seem now beside our Purpose. When you are a Christian it will be then Time enough to argue this Point. And you will be the nearer being so, if the Way be shorten'd by omitting it for the present. *ALC.* Not so near neither, as you perhaps imagine: For, notwithstanding all the fair and plausible Things you may say about Tradition, when I consider the Spirit of Forgery which reigned in the primitive Times, and reflect on the several Gospels, Acts, and Epistles, attributed to the Apostles, which yet are acknowledged to be spurious, I confess I cannot help suspecting the whole. *EUPH.* Tell me, *Alciphron*, do you suspect all *Plato*'s Writings for spurious, because the Dialogue upon Death, for instance, is allowed to be so? Or will you admit none of *Tully*'s Writings to be genuine, because *Sigonius* imposed a Book of his own writing for *Tully*'s Treatise *de Consolatione*, and the Imposture passed for some Time on the World? *ALC.* Suppose I admit for the Works of *Tully* and *Plato* those that commonly pass for such. What then?

EUPH.

EUPH. Why then I would fain know, whether it be equal and impartial in a Freethinker, to measure the Credibility of profane and sacred Books by a different Rule. Let us know upon what Foot we Christians are to argue with Minute Philosophers: whether we may be allowed the Benefit of common Maxims in Logic and Criticism? If we may, be pleased to assign a Reason why suppositious Writings, which in the Style and Manner and Matter bear visible Marks of Imposture, and have accordingly been rejected by the Church, can be made an Argument against those which have been universally received, and handed down by an unanimous constant Tradition. There have been in all Ages and in all great Societies of Men, many capricious, vain, or wicked Impostors, who for different Ends have abused the World by spurious Writings, and created Work for Critics both in profane and sacred Learning. And it would seem as silly to reject the True Writings of profane Authors for the sake of the spurious, as it would seem unreasonable to suppose, that among the Heretics and several Sects of Christians, there should be none capable of the like Imposture. *ALC.* I see no means for judging: it is all dark and doubtful, meer

DIAL. VI.

DIAL. VI. Gueſs-work, at ſo great diſtance of Time.

CRI. But if I know, that a Number of fit Perſons met together in Council, did examine and diſtinguiſh authentic Writings from ſpurious, relating to a Point of the higheſt Concern, in an Age near the Date of thoſe Writings; though I at the Diſtance of many more Centuries had no other Proof; yet their Deciſion may be of Weight to determine my Judgment. Since it is probable they might have had ſeveral Proofs and Reaſons for what they did, and not at all improbable, that thoſe Reaſons might be loſt in ſo long a Tract of Time *.

VI. *ALC.* But, be the Tradition ever ſo well atteſted, and the Books ever ſo genuine, yet I cannot ſuppoſe them wrote by Perſons divinely inſpired, ſo long as I ſee in them certain Characters inconſiſtent with ſuch a Suppoſition. Surely the pureſt Language, the moſt perfect Style, the exacteſt Method, and in a Word all the Excellencies of good Writing, might be expected in a Piece compoſed or dictated by the Spirit of God: But Books, wherein we find the reverſe of all this, it were impious, not, to reject, but to attribute to the Divinity. *EUPH.* Say, *Alciphron*,

* Vide Can. lx. Concil. Laodicen.

are

are the Lakes, the Rivers, or the Ocean bounded by ſtraight Lines? Are the Hills and Mountains exact Cones or Pyramids? Or the Stars caſt into regular Figures? *ALC.* They are not. *EUPH.* But in the Works of Inſects, we may obſerve Figures as exact as if they were drawn by the Rule and Compaſs. *ALC.* We may. *EUPH.* Should it not ſeem, therefore, that a regular Exactneſs, or ſcrupulous Attention to what Men call the Rules of Art, is not obſerved in the great Productions of the Author of Nature? *ALC.* It ſhould. *EUPH.* And when a great Prince declareth his Will in Laws and Edicts to his Subjects, is he careful about a pure Style or elegant Compoſition? Does he not leave his Secretaries and Clerks to expreſs his Senſe in their own Words? Is not the Phraſe on ſuch Occaſions thought proper if it conveys as much as was intended? And would not the divine Strain of certain modern Critics be judged affected and improper for ſuch Uſes? *ALC.* It muſt be owned, Laws and Edicts and Grants, for Solœciſm and Tautology, are very offenſive to the harmonious Ears of a fine Writer. *EUPH.* Why then ſhould we expect in the Oracles of God an Exactneſs, that would be misbecoming and beneath the Dignity of an

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DIAL. VI. Earthly Monarch, and which bears no Proportion or Reſemblance to the magnificent Works of the Creation? *ALC.* But granting that a nice Regard to Particles and critical Rules is a Thing too little and mean to be expected in Divine Revelations; and that there is more Force and Spirit, and true Greatneſs in a negligent unequal Style, than in the well turned Periods of a polite Writer: Yet what is all this to the bald and flat Compoſitions of thoſe you call the divine Penmen? I can never be perſuaded, the ſupreme Being would pick out the pooreſt and meaneſt of Scriblers for his Secretaries. *EUPH.* O *Alciphron*, if I durſt follow my own Judgment, I ſhould be apt to think there are noble Beauties in the Style of the Holy Scripture: in the narrative Parts a Strain ſo ſimple and unaffected: in the devotional and prophetic, ſo animated and ſublime: and in the doctrinal Parts ſuch an Air of Dignity and Authority as ſeems to ſpeak their Original divine. But I ſhall not enter into a Diſpute about Taſte; much leſs ſet up my Judgment on ſo nice a Point againſt that of the Wits, and Men of Genius, with which your Sect abounds. And I have no Temptation to it, inaſmuch as it ſeems to me, the Oracles of God are not the leſs ſo for being delivered in a plain Dreſs,

Dreſs, rather than in *the enticing Words of Man's Wiſdom.* *ALC.* This may perhaps be an Apology for ſome Simplicity and Negligence in writing. DIAL. VI.

VII. But what Apology can be made for Nonſenſe, crude Nonſenſe? Of which I could eaſily aſſign many Inſtances, having once in my Life read the Scripture thorough with that very View. Look here, ſaid he, opening a Bible, in the forty ninth Pſalm, the Author begins very magnificently, calling upon all the Inhabitants of the Earth to give ear, and aſſuring them his Mouth ſhall ſpeak of Wiſdom, and the Meditation of his Heart ſhall be of Underſtanding.

Quid dignum tanto feret hic promiſſor hiatu?

He hath no ſooner done with his Preface, but he puts this ſenſeleſs Queſtion. 'Wherefore ſhould I fear in the Days 'of Evil; when the Wickedneſs of my 'Heels ſhall compaſs me about?' The Iniquity of my Heels! What Nonſenſe after ſuch a ſolemn Introduction! *EUPH.* For my own part, I have naturally weak Eyes, and know there are many Things that I cannot ſee, which are nevertheleſs diſtinctly ſeen by others. I do not there-

DIAL. VI. fore conclude a Thing to be abſolutely inviſible; becauſe it is ſo to me. And ſince it is poſſible it may be with my Underſtanding, as it is with my Eyes, I dare not pronounce a Thing to be Nonſenſe, becauſe I do not underſtand it. Of this Paſſage many Interpretations are given. The Word render'd Heels may ſignify Fraud or Supplantation: By ſome it is tranſlated paſt Wickedneſs, the Heel being the hinder Part of the Foot; by others Iniquity in the End of my Days, the Heel being one Extremity of the Body; by ſome the Iniquity of my Enemies that may ſupplant me; by others my own Faults or Iniquities which I have paſſed over as light Matters, and trampled under my Feet. Some render it the Iniquity of my Ways: others my Tranſgreſſions which are like Slips and Slidings of the Heel. And after all might not this Expreſſion ſo harſh and odd to *Engliſh* Ears have been very natural and obvious in the *Hebrew* Tongue, which, as every other Language, had its Idioms? the Force and Propriety whereof may as eaſily be conceived loſt in a long Tract of Time, as the Signification of ſome *Hebrew* Words, which are not now intelligible, though no Body doubts but they had once a Meaning as well as the other Words of that Language. Granting, therefore, that certain

certain Paſſages in the Holy Scripture may not be underſtood, it will not thence follow that its Penmen wrote Nonſenſe: For I conceive Nonſenſe to be one Thing and Unintelligible another. *CRI.* An *Engliſh* Gentleman of my Acquaintance one Day entertaining ſome Foreigners at his Houſe, ſent a Servant to know the Occaſion of a ſudden Tumult in the Yard, who brought him Word, the Horſes were fallen together by the Ears: His Gueſts inquiring what the Matter was, he tranſlates it literally; *Les Chevaux ſont tombez enſemble par les oreilles.* Which made them ſtare; what expreſſed a very plain Senſe in the Original *Engliſh*, being incomprehenſible when rendered Word for Word into *French.* And I remember to have heard a Man excuſe the Bulls of his Countrymen, by ſuppoſing them ſo many literal Tranſlations. *EUPH.* But not to grow tedious, I refer to the Critics and Commentators where you will find the Uſe of this Remark, which clearing up ſeveral obſcure Paſſages you took for Nonſenſe, may poſſibly incline you to ſuſpect your own Judgment of the reſt. In this very Pſalm you have pitched on, the good Senſe and Moral contained in what follows, ſhould, methinks, make a candid Reader judge favourably of the original Senſe of the Author, in that

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DIAL. VI. Part which he could not underſtand. Say, *Alciphron*, in reading the Claſſics, do you forthwith conclude every Paſſage to be Nonſenſe, that you cannot make Senſe of? *ALC.* By no Means: Difficulties muſt be ſuppoſed to riſe from different Idioms, old Cuſtoms, Hints, and Alluſions, clear in one Time or Place, and obſcure in another. *EUPH.* And why will you not judge of Scripture by the ſame Rule. Thoſe Sources of Obſcurity you mention are all common both to ſacred and profane Writings: And there is no Doubt, but an exacter Knowledge in Language and Circumſtances, would in both cauſe Difficulties to vaniſh like Shades before the Light of the Sun. *Jeremiah*, to deſcribe a furious Invader, ſaith: *Behold, he ſhall come up as a Lion from the Swelling of* Jordan *againſt the Habitation of the ſtrong.* One would be apt to think this Paſſage odd and improper, and that it had been more reaſonable to have ſaid, *a Lion from the Mountain or the Deſart.* But Travellers, as an ingenious Man obſerves, who have ſeen the River *Jordan* bounded by low Lands with many Reeds or Thickets affording Shelter to wild Beaſts, (which being ſuddenly diſlodged by a rapid Overflowing of the River, ruſh into the Upland Country) perceive the Force

Force and Propriety of the Comparison; and that the Difficulty proceeds, not from Nonſenſe in the Writer, but from Ignorance in the Reader. It is needleſs to amaſs together Inſtances which may be found in every Commentator: I only beg leave to obſerve, that ſometimes Men, looking deeper or higher than they need for a profound or remote Senſe, overlook the natural obvious Senſe, lying, if I may ſo ſay, at their Feet, and ſo make Difficulties inſtead of finding them. This ſeems to be the Caſe of that celebrated Paſſage, which hath created ſo much Work in St. *Paul*'s firſt Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*. 'What ſhall they do which are baptized 'for the dead, if the dead riſe not at 'all? Why are they then baptized for the 'dead?' I remember to have heard this Text explained by *Laches* the Vicar of our Pariſh to my Neighbour *Lycon*, who was much perplexed about its Meaning. If it had been tranſlated, as it might very juſtly, *baptized for the ſake of the dead*, I do not ſee, ſaid *Laches*, why People ſhould be puzzled about the Senſe of this Paſſage; for tell me, I beſeech you, for whoſe ſake do you think thoſe Chriſtians were baptized? For whoſe ſake, anſwered *Lycon*, but their own? How do you mean, for their own ſake in this Life, or the next? DIAL. VI.

DIAL. VI. next? Doubtleſs in the next, for it was plain they could get nothing by it in this. They were then, replied *Laches*, baptized not for the ſake of themſelves while living, but for the ſake of themſelves when dead; not for the Living, but the Dead. I grant it. Baptiſm therefore muſt have been to them a fruitleſs thing, if the Dead riſe not at all. It muſt. Whence *Laches* inferred, That St. *Paul*'s Argument was clear and pertinent for the Reſurrection: And *Lycon* allowed it to be *argumentum ad hominem* to thoſe who had ſought Baptiſm. There is then, concluded *Laches*, no Neceſſity for ſuppoſing, that living Men were in thoſe Days baptized inſtead of thoſe who died without Baptiſm, or of running into any other odd Suppoſitions, or ſtrained and far-fetched Interpretations to make Senſe of this Paſſage. *ALC.* Here and there a difficult Paſſage may be cleared: But there are many which no Art or Wit of Man can account for. What ſay you to thoſe Diſcoveries, made by ſome of our learned Writers, of falſe Citations from the Old Teſtament found in the Goſpel? *EUPH.* That ſome few Paſſages are cited by the Writers of the New Teſtament, out of the Old, and by the Fathers out of the New, which are not in ſo many Words

Words to be found in them, is no new Discovery of Minute Philosophers, but known and observed long before by Christian Writers; who have made no Scruple to grant, that some things might have been inserted by careless or mistaken Transcribers into the Text, from the Margin, others left out, and others altered; whence so many various Readings. But these are things of small moment, and that all other ancient Authors have been subject to; and upon which no Point of Doctrine depends, which may not be proved without them. Nay further, if it be any Advantage to your Cause, it hath been observed, That the eighteenth *Psalm*, as recited in the twenty second Chapter of the Second Book of *Samuel*, varies in above forty Places, if you regard every little literal Difference: And that a Critic may now and then discover small Variations, is what no body can deny. But to make the most of these Concessions, What can you infer from them, more than that the Design of the Holy Scripture was not to make us exactly knowing in Circumstantials? And that the Spirit did not dictate every Particle and Syllable, or preserve them from every minute Alteration by Miracle? which to believe, would look like Rabinical Superstition. *ALC.* But what

Marks

DIAL. VI. Marks of Divinity can poſſibly be in Writings which do not reach the Exactneſs even of Humane Art? *EUPH.* I never thought nor expected that the Holy Scripture ſhould ſhew it ſelf divine, by a circumſtantial Accuracy of Narration, by Exactneſs of Method, by ſtrictly obſerving the Rules of Rhetoric, Grammar, and Criticiſm, in harmonious Periods, in elegant and choice Expreſſions, or in technical Definitions and Partitions. Theſe things would look too like a Humane Compoſition. Methinks there is in that ſimple, unaffected, artleſs, unequal, bold, figurative Style of the Holy Scripture, a Character ſingularly great and majeſtic, and that looks more like Divine Inſpiration, than any other Compoſition that I know. But, as I ſaid before, I ſhall not diſpute a Point of Criticiſm with the Gentlemen of your Sect, who, it ſeems, are the modern Standard for Wit and Taſte. *ALC.* Well, I ſhall not inſiſt on ſmall Slips, or the Inaccuracy of citing or tranſcribing: And I freely own, that Repetitions, Want of Method, or Want of Exactneſs in Circumſtances, are not the things that chiefly ſtick with me; no more than the plain patriarchal Manners, or the peculiar Uſages and Cuſtoms of the Jews and firſt Chriſtians ſo different from ours;

ours; and that to reject the Scripture on such Accounts would be to act like those *French* Wits, who censure *Homer* because they do not find in him the Style, Notions, and Manners of their own Age and Country. Was there nothing else to divide us, I should make no great Difficulty of owning, That a popular uncorrect Style might answer the general Ends of Revelation, as well, perhaps, as a more critical and exact one. But the Obscurity still sticks with me. Methinks if the Supreme Being had spoke to Man, he would have spoke clearly to him, and that the Word of God should not need a Comment. DIAL. VI.

VIII. *EUPH.* You seem, *Alciphron*, to think Obscurity a Defect; but if it should prove to be no Defect, there would then be no Force in this Objection. *ALC.* I grant there would not. *EUPH.* Pray tell me, are not Speech and Style instrumental to convey Thoughts and Notions, to beget Knowledge, Opinion, and Assent? *ALC.* This is true. *EUPH.* And is not the Perfection of an Instrument to be measured by the Use to which it is subservient? *ALC.* It is. *EUPH.* What therefore is a Defect in one Instrument, may be none in another. For Instance,

edged

DIAL. VI. edged Tools are in general designed to cut: but the Uses of an Axe and a Razor being different, it is no Defect in an Axe, that it hath not the keen Edge of a Razor: nor in the Razor, that it hath not the Weight or Strength of an Axe. *ALC.* I acknowledge this to be true. *EUPH.* And may we not say in general, that every Instrument is perfect which answers the Purpose or Intention of him who useth it? *ALC.* We may. *EUPH.* Hence it seems to follow, that no Man's Speech is defective in point of Clearness, though it should not be intelligible to all Men, if it be sufficiently so to those who, he intended, should understand it: or though it should not in all Parts be equally clear, or convey a perfect Knowledge, where he intended only an imperfect Hint. *ALC.* It seems so. *EUPH.* Ought we not therefore to know the Intention of the Speaker, to be able to know whether his Style be obscure through Defect or Design? *ALC.* We ought. *EUPH.* But is it possible for Man to know all the Ends and Purposes of God's Revelations? *ALC.* It is not. *EUPH.* How then can you tell, but the Obscurity of some Parts of Scripture may well consist with the Purpose which you know not, and consequently be no Argument against its coming from God? The

Books

Books of Holy Scripture were written in ancient Languages, at distant Times, on sundry Occasions, and very different Subjects. Is it not therefore reasonable to imagine, that some Parts or Passages might have been clearly enough understood by those, for whose proper Use they were principally designed, and yet seem obscure to us, who speak another Language, and live in other Times? Is it at all absurd or unsuitable to the Notion we have of God or Man, to suppose that God may reveal, and yet reveal with a Reserve, upon certain remote and sublime Subjects, content to give us Hints and Glimpses, rather than Views? May we not also suppose from the Reason of Things, and the Analogy of Nature, that some Points, which might otherwise have been more clearly explained, were left obscure meerly to encourage our Diligence and Modesty? Two Virtues, which, if it might not seem disrespectful to such great Men, I would recommend to the Minute Philosophers. *Lysicles* replied, This indeed is excellent: You expect that Men of Sense and Spirit should in great Humility put out their Eyes, and blindly swallow all the Absurdities and Nonsense that shall be offered to them for Divine Revelation. *EUPH.* On the contrary, I would have them

DIAL. VI. them open their Eyes, look ſharply, and try the Spirit, whether it is of God: and not ſupinely and ignorantly condemn in the groſs, all Religions together, Piety with Superſtition, Truth for the ſake of Error, Matter of Fact for the ſake of Fiction: a Conduct, which at firſt Sight would ſeem abſurd in Hiſtory, Phyſic, or any other Branch of Humane Inquiry! But to compare the Chriſtian Syſtem, or Holy Scriptures, with other Pretences to Divine Revelation, to conſider impartially the Doctrines, Precepts, and Events therein contained; weigh them in the balance with any other religious, natural, moral, or hiſtorical Accounts; and diligently to examine all thoſe Proofs, internal and external, that for ſo many Ages have been able to influence and perſuade ſo many wiſe, learned, and inquiſitive Men: Perhaps they might find in it certain peculiar Characters, which ſufficiently diſtinguiſh it from all other Religions and pretended Revelations, whereon to ground a reaſonable Faith. In which Caſe I leave them to conſider, whether it would be right to reject with peremptory Scorn a Revelation ſo diſtinguiſhed and atteſted, upon account of Obſcurity in ſome Parts of it? and whether it would ſeem beneath Men of their Senſe and Spi-

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rit to acknowledge, that, for ought they know, a Light inadequate to things, may yet be adequate to the Purpose of Providence? and whether it might be unbecoming their Sagacity and critical Skill to own, that literal Translations from Books in an ancient Oriental Tongue, wherein there are so many Peculiarities, as to the Manner of Writing, the Figures of Speech, and Structure of the Phrase, so remote from all our modern Idioms, and in which we have no other coæval Writings extant, might well be obscure in many Places, especially such as treat of Subjects sublime and difficult in their own Nature, or allude to Things, Customs, or Events, very distant from our Knowledge? And lastly, whether it might not become their Character, as impartial and unprejudiced Men, to consider the Bible in the same Light they would profane Authors? Men are apt to make great Allowance for Transpositions, Omissions, and literal Errors of Transcribers in other ancient Books, and very great for the difference of Style and Manners, especially in Eastern Writings, such as the Remains of *Zoroaster* and *Confucius*, and why not in the Prophets? In reading *Horace* or *Persius*, to make out the Sense, they will be at the pains to discover a hidden *Drama*, and why not in *Solomon* or St. *Paul*?

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DIAL. VI. *Paul?* I hear there are certain ingenious Men who deſpiſe King *David*'s Poetry, and yet profeſs to admire *Homer* and *Pindar*. If there be no Prejudice or Affectation in this, let them but make a literal Verſion from thoſe Authors into *Engliſh* Proſe, and they will then be better able to judge of the Pſalms. *ALC.* You may diſcourſe and expatiate; but notwithſtanding all you have ſaid or ſhall ſay, it is a clear Point that a Revelation, which doth not reveal, can be no better than a Contradiction in Terms. *EUPH.* Tell me, *Alciphron*, do you not acknowledge the Light of the Sun to be the moſt glorious Production of Providence in this Natural World? *ALC.* Suppoſe I do. *EUPH.* This Light, nevertheleſs, which you cannot deny to be of God's making, ſhines only on the Surface of Things, ſhines not at all in the Night, ſhines imperfectly in the Twilight, is often interrupted, refracted, and obſcured, repreſents diſtant things, and ſmall things dubiouſly, imperfectly, or not at all. Is this true or no? *ALC.* It is. *EUPH.* Should it not follow therefore, that to expect in this World a conſtant uniform Light from God, without any Mixture of Shade or Myſtery, would be departing from the Rule and Analogy of the Creation? and that

that consequently it is no Argument the Light of Revelation is not Divine, because it may not be so clear and full as you expect; or because it may not equally shine at all Times, or in all Places. *ALC.* As I profess my self candid and indifferent throughout this Debate, I must needs own you say some plausible things, as a Man of Argument will never fail to do in vindication of his Prejudices. DIAL. VI.

IX. But, to deal plainly, I must tell you once for all, that you may question and answer, illustrate, and enlarge for ever, without being able to convince me that the Christian Religion is of Divine Revelation. I have said several things, and have many more to say, which, believe me, have Weight not only with my self, but with many great Men my very good Friends, and will have Weight whatever *Euphranor* can say to the contrary. *EUPH.* O *Alciphron!* I envy you the Happiness of such Acquaintance. But, as my Lot fallen in this remote Corner deprives me of that Advantage, I am obliged to make the most of this Opportunity, which you and *Lysicles* have put into my Hands. I consider you as two able Chirurgeons, and you were pleased to consider me as a Patient, whose Cure you have generously under-

DIAL. VI. taken. Now a Patient muſt have full Liberty to explain his Caſe, and tell all his Symptoms, the concealing of which might prevent a perfect Cure. You will be pleaſed therefore to underſtand me, not as objecting to, or arguing againſt, either your Skill or Medicines, but only as ſetting forth my own Caſe, and the Effects they have upon me. Say, *Alciphron*, did you not give me to underſtand that you would extirpate my Prejudices? *ALC.* It is true: a good Phyſician eradicates every Fibre of the Diſeaſe. Come, you ſhall have a patient Hearing. *EUPH.* Pray, was it not the Opinion of *Plato*, that God inſpired particular Men, as Organs or Trumpets, to proclaim and ſound forth his Oracles to the World* ? And was not the ſame Opinion alſo embraced by others the greateſt Writers of Antiquity? *CRI.* *Socrates* ſeems to have thought that all true Poets ſpoke by Inſpiration; and *Tully*, that there was no extraordinary Genius without it. This hath made ſome of our affected Free-thinkers attempt to paſs themſelves upon the World for Enthuſiaſts. *ALC.* What would you infer from all this? *EUPH.* I would infer, that Inſpiration ſhould ſeem nothing impoſſible or abſurd, but rather agreeable to the Light

* Plato *in* Ione.

of

of Reaſon, and the Notions of Mankind. And this, I ſuppoſe, you will acknowledge, having made it an Objection againſt a particular Revelation, that there are ſo many Pretences to it throughout the World. *ALC.* O *Euphranor*, he who looks into the bottom of things, and reſolves them into their firſt Principles, is not eaſily amuſed with Words. The Word *Inſpiration* ſounds indeed big, but let us, if you pleaſe, take an original View of the Thing ſignified by it. To inſpire, is a Word borrowed from the *Latin*, and ſtrictly taken means no more than to breathe or blow in: nothing therefore can be inſpired but what can be blown or breathed, and nothing can be ſo but Wind or Vapour, which indeed may fill or puff up Men with fanatical and hypocondriacal Ravings. This ſort of Inſpiration I readily admit. *EUPH.* What you ſay is ſubtle, and I know not what Effect it might have upon me, if your profound Diſcourſe did not hinder its own Operation. *ALC.* How ſo? *EUPH.* Tell me, *Alciphron*, do you diſcourſe, or do you not? To me it ſeems that you diſcourſe admirably. *ALC.* Be that as it will, it is certain I diſcourſe. *EUPH.* But when I endeavour to look into the bottom of things, behold! a Scruple riſeth

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DIAL. VI. in my Mind how this can be; for to *diſcourſe* is a Word of *Latin* Derivation, which originally ſignifies to run about; and a Man cannot run about but he muſt change Place, and move his Legs; ſo long therefore as you ſit on this Bench, you cannot be ſaid to diſcourſe. Solve me this Difficulty, and then perhaps I may be able to ſolve yours. *ALC.* You are to know, that Diſcourſe is a Word borrowed from ſenſible Things, to expreſs an inviſible Action of the Mind, reaſoning or inferring one Thing from another: and, in this tranſlated Senſe, we may be ſaid to diſcourſe, though we ſit ſtill. *EUPH.* And may we not as well conceive, that the Term Inſpiration might be borrowed from ſenſible things to denote an Action of God, in an extraordinary manner, influencing, exciting, and enlightening the Mind of a Prophet or an Apoſtle? who, in this ſecondary, figurative, and tranſlated Senſe, may truly be ſaid to be inſpired, though there ſhould be nothing in the Caſe of that Wind or Vapour implied in the original Senſe of the Word? It ſeems to me, that we may by looking into our own Minds plainly perceive certain Inſtincts, Impulſes, and Tendencies, which at proper Periods and Occaſions ſpring up unaccountably in the Soul of Man. We obſerve very

very visible Signs of the same in all other Animals. And these things being ordinary and natural, what hinders but we may conceive it possible for the Humane Mind, upon an extraordinary Account, to be moved in an extraordinary manner, and its Faculties stirred up and actuated by a supernatural Power? That there are, and have been, and are likely to be wild Visions, and hypochondriacal Ravings, no body can deny: but to infer from thence, that there are no true Inspirations would be too like concluding, that some Men are not in their Senses, because other Men are Fools. And though I am no Prophet, and consequently cannot pretend to a clear Notion of this Matter; yet I shall not therefore take upon me to deny, but a true Prophet or inspired Person might have had as certain Means of discerning between divine Inspiration and hypochondriacal Fancy, as you can between Sleeping and Waking, till you have proved the contrary. You may meet in the Book of *Jeremiah* with this Passage: 'The 'Prophet that hath a dream let him tell 'a dream: and he that hath my word, 'let him speak my word faithfully: what 'is the chaff to the wheat, saith the 'Lord? Is not my word like as a Fire, 'saith the Lord, and like a hammer that

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DIAL. VI. 'breaketh the rock in pieces?*' You see here a Distinction made between Wheat and Chaff, true and spurious, with the mighty Force and Power of the former. But I beg Pardon for quoting Scripture to you. I make my Appeal to the general Sense of Mankind, and the Opinion of the wisest Heathens, which seems sufficient to conclude Divine Inspiration possible, if not probable, at least till you prove the contrary.

X. *ALC.* The Possibility of Inspirations and Revelations I do not think it necessary to deny. Make the best you can of this Concession. *EUPH.* Now what is allowed possible we may suppose in fact. *ALC.* We may. *EUPH.* Let us then suppose, that God had been pleased to make a Revelation to Men; and that he inspired some as a means to instruct others. Having supposed this, can you deny, that their inspired Discourses and Revelations might have been committed to Writing, or that being written, after a long Tract of Time they might become in several Places obscure; that some of them might even originally have been less clear than others, or that they might suffer some Alteration by frequent Transcribing,

* Jerem. xxiii. 28, 29.

as other Writings are known to have done? Is it not even very probable that all theſe things would happen? *ALC.* I grant it. *EUPH.* And granting this, with what Pretence can you reject the Holy Scriptures as not being divine, upon the account of ſuch Signs or Marks, as you acknowledge would probably attend a Divine Revelation tranſmitted down to us through ſo many Ages? *ALC.* But allowing all that in reaſon you can deſire, and granting that this may account for ſome Obſcurity, may reconcile ſome ſmall Differences, or ſatisfy us how ſome Difficulties might ariſe by inſerting, omitting, or changing here and there a Letter, a Word, or perhaps a Sentence: Yet theſe are but ſmall Matters, in reſpect of the much more conſiderable and weighty Objections I could produce, againſt the confeſſed Doctrines, or ſubject Matter of thoſe Writings. Let us ſee what is contained in theſe ſacred Books, and then judge whether it is probable or poſſible, ſuch Revelations ſhould ever have been made by God? Now I defy the Wit of Man to contrive any thing more extravagant, than the Accounts we there find of Apparitions, Devils, Miracles, God manifeſt in the Fleſh, Regeneration, Grace, Self-denial, Reſurrection of the Dead, and ſuch

DIAL. VI. like *ægri ſomnia:* things ſo odd, unaccountable, and remote from the Apprehenſion of Mankind, you may as ſoon waſh a Blackamore white, as clear them of Abſurdity. No critical Skill can juſtify them, no Tradition recommend them, I will not ſay for Divine Revelations, but even for the Inventions of Men of Senſe. *EUPH.* I had always a great Opinion of your Sagacity, but now, *Alciphron*, I conſider you as ſomething more than Man: elſe how ſhould it be poſſible for you to know, what or how far it may be proper for God to reveal? Methinks it may conſiſt with all due Deference to the greateſt of Humane Underſtandings, to ſuppoſe them ignorant of many things, which are not ſuited to their Faculties, or lie out of their Reach. Even the Counſels of Princes lie often beyond the Ken of their Subjects, who can only know ſo much as is revealed by thoſe at the Helm; and are often unqualified to judge of the Uſefulneſs and Tendency even of that, till in due Time the Scheme unfolds, and is accounted for by ſucceeding Events. That many Points contained in Holy Scripture are remote from the common Apprehenſions of Mankind, cannot be denied. But I do not ſee, that it follows from thence, they are not of Divine Revelation.

tion. On the contrary, ſhould it not ſeem reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that a Revelation from God ſhould contain ſomething different in Kind, or more excellent in Degree, than what lay open to the common Senſe of Men, or could even be diſcovered by the moſt ſagacious Philoſopher? Accounts of ſeparate Spirits, good or bad, Prophecies, Miracles, and ſuch things, are undoubtedly ſtrange: but I would fain ſee how you can prove them impoſſible or abſurd. *ALC.* Some things there are ſo evidently abſurd, that it would be almoſt as ſilly to diſprove them as to believe them: and I take theſe to be of that Claſs. DIAL. VI.

XI. *EUPH.* But is it not poſſible, ſome Men may ſhew as much Prejudice and Narrowneſs in rejecting all ſuch Accounts, as others might Eaſineſs and Credulity in admitting them? I never durſt make my own Obſervation or Experience the Rule and Meaſure of things Spiritual, Supernatural, or relating to another World, becauſe I ſhould think it a very bad one, even for the viſible and natural things of this: It would be judging like the *Siameſe*, who was poſitive it did not freeze in *Holland*, becauſe he had never known ſuch a thing as hard Water or Ice

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Ice in his own Country. I cannot comprehend why any one, who admits the Union of the Soul and Body, ſhould pronounce it impoſſible for the Humane Nature to be united to the Divine, in a manner ineffable and incomprehenſible by Reaſon. Neither can I ſee any Abſurdity in admitting, that ſinful Man may become Regenerate, or a New Creature, by the Grace of God reclaiming him from a carnal Life, to a ſpiritual Life of Virtue and Holineſs. And ſince the being governed by Senſe and Appetite is contrary to the Happineſs and Perfection of a rational Creature, I do not at all wonder that we are preſcribed Self-denial. As for the Reſurrection of the Dead, I do not conceive it ſo very contrary to the Analogy of Nature, when I behold Vegetables left to rot in the Earth, riſe up again with new Life and Vigour, or a Worm to all appearance dead, change its Nature, and that, which in its firſt Being crawled on the Earth, become a new Species, and fly abroad with Wings. And indeed when I conſider, that the Soul and Body are things ſo very different and heterogeneous, I can ſee no reaſon to be poſitive, that the one muſt neceſſarily be extinguiſhed upon the Diſſolution of the other; eſpecially ſince I find in my ſelf a ſtrong natural

natural Desire of Immortality, and I have not observed that natural Appetites are wont to be given in vain, or meerly to be frustrated. Upon the whole, those Points which you account extravagant and absurd, I dare not pronounce to be so till I see good Reason for it. DIAL. VI.

XII. *CRI.* No, *Alciphron*, your positive Airs must not pass for Proofs; nor will it suffice to say, things are contrary to common Sense, to make us think they are so: By common Sense, I suppose, should be meant either the general Sense of Mankind, or the improved Reason of thinking Men. Now I believe that all those Articles, you have with so much Capacity and Fire at once summed up and exploded, may be shewn to be not disagreeable, much less contrary to common Sense in one or other of these Acceptations. That the Gods might appear and converse among Men, and that the Divinity might inhabit Humane Nature, were Points allowed by the Heathens; and for this I appeal to their Poets and Philosophers, whose Testimonies are so numerous and clear, that it would be an Affront to repeat them to a Man of any Education. And though the Notion of a Devil may not be so obvious, or so fully described, yet there appear plain Traces

DIAL. VI. Traces of it, either from Reaſon or Tradition. The latter *Platoniſts*, as *Porphyry* and *Iamblichus*, are very clear in the Point, allowing that evil Dæmons delude and tempt, hurt and poſſeſs Mankind. That the ancient *Greeks*, *Chaldæans*, and *Ægyptians*, believed both good and bad Angels, may be plainly collected from *Plato*, *Plutarch*, and the *Chaldæan* Oracles. *Origen* obſerves, That almoſt all the Gentiles, who held the Being of Dæmons, allowed there were bad ones *. There is even ſomething as early as *Homer*, that is thought by the learned Cardinal *Beſſarion* † to allude to the Fall of Satan, in the Account of *Ate*, whom the Poet repreſents as caſt down from Heaven by *Jove*, and then wandring about the Earth, doing Miſchief to Mankind. This ſame *Ate* is ſaid by *Heſiod*, to be the Daughter of *Diſcord*; and by *Euripides*, in his *Hippolytus*, is mentioned as a Tempter to Evil. And it is very remarkable, that *Plutarch*, in his Book, *De vitando ære alieno*, ſpeaks after *Empedocles*, of certain Dæmons that fell from Heaven, and were baniſhed by God, Δαίμονες θεήλατοι καὶ ἀφανοπετεῖς. Nor is that leſs remarkable which is obſerved

* Origen. l. 7. contra Celſum.
† In calumniat. Platonis, l. 3. c. 7.

by

by *Ficinus* from *Pherecydes Syrus*, That there had been a Downfal of Dæmons who revolted from God: and that *Ophioneus* (the old Serpent) was Head of that rebellious Crew *. Then as to other Articles, let any one consider what the *Pythagoreans* taught, of the Purgation and λύσις, or Deliverance of the Soul: What most Philosophers, but especially the *Stoics*, of subduing our Passions: What *Plato* and *Hierocles* have said of forgiving Injuries: What the acute and sagacious *Aristotle* writes, in his *Ethics* to *Nicomachus*, of the Spiritual and Divine Life, that Life, which, according to him, is too excellent to be thought Humane; insomuch as Man, so far forth as Man, cannot attain to it; but only so far forth as he hath something Divine in him: And particularly, let him reflect on what *Socrates* taught, to wit, That Virtue is not to be learned from Men, that it is the Gift of God, and that good Men are not good by virtue of Humane Care or Diligence, οὐκ εἶναι ἀνθρωπίνῳ ἐπιμέλειαν ἢ ἀγαθοὶ ἀγαθοὶ γίγνονται †. Let any Man, who really thinks, but consider what other thinking Men have thought, who cannot DIAL. VI.

* Vid. Argum. in Phædrum Platonis.
† Vid. Plat. in Protag. & alibi passim.

be

DIAL. VI. be ſuppoſed prejudiced in favour of Revealed Religion; and he will ſee cauſe, if not to think with Reverence of the Chriſtian Doctrines of Grace, Self-denial, Regeneration, Sanctification, and the reſt, even the moſt myſterious, at leaſt to judge more modeſtly and warily, than he who ſhall, with a confident Air, pronounce them abſurd, and repugnant to the Reaſon of Mankind. And in regard to a future State, the common Senſe of the Gentile World, modern or ancient, and the Opinions of the wiſeſt Men of Antiquity, are things ſo well known, that I need ſay nothing about them. To me it ſeems, the Minute Philoſophers, when they appeal to Reaſon and common Senſe, mean only the Senſe of their own Party: A Coin, how current ſoever among themſelves, that other Men will bring to the Touchſtone, and paſs for no more than it is worth. *LYS.* Be thoſe Notions agreeable to what or whoſe Senſe they may, they are not agreeable to mine. And if I am thought ignorant for this, I pity thoſe who think me ſo.

XIII. I enjoy my ſelf, and follow my own Courſes, without Remorſe or Fear; which I ſhould not do, if my Head were filled with Enthuſiaſm; whether Gentile

tile or Christian, Philosophical or Revealed, it is all one to me. Let others know or believe what they can, and make the best on't, I, for my part, am happy and safe in my Ignorance, *CRI.* Perhaps not so safe neither. *LYS.* Why, surely you won't pretend that Ignorance is criminal? *CRI.* Ignorance alone is not a Crime. But that wilful Ignorance, affected Ignorance, Ignorance from Sloth, or conceited Ignorance, is a Fault, might easily be proved by the Testimony of Heathen Writers: and it needs no Proof to shew that if Ignorance be our Fault, we cannot be secure in it as an Excuse, *LYS.* Honest *Crito* seems to hint, that a Man should take care to inform himself, while alive, lest his Neglect be punished when he is dead. Nothing is so pusillanimous and unbecoming a Gentleman, as Fear: Nor could you take a likelier Course to fix and rivet a Man of Honour in Guilt, than by attempting to frighten him out of it. This is the stale, absurd Stratagem of Priests, and that which makes them, and their Religion, more odious and contemptible to me than all the other Articles put together. *CRI.* I would fain know why it may not be reasonable for a Man of Honour, or any Man who has done amiss to fear? Guilt

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DIAL. VI. is the natural Parent of Fear; and Nature is not uſed to make Men fear where there is no Occaſion. That impious and profane Men ſhould expect divine Puniſhment, doth not ſeem ſo abſurd to conceive: and that under this Expectation they ſhould be uneaſy and even afraid, how conſiſtent ſoever it may or may not be with Honour, I am ſure conſiſts with Reaſon. *LYS.* That Thing of Hell and Eternal Puniſhment is the moſt abſurd, as well as the moſt diſagreeable Thought that ever entered into the Head of Mortal Man. *CRI.* But you muſt own that it is not an Abſurdity peculiar to Chriſtians, ſince *Socrates*, that great Free-thinker of *Athens*, thought it probable there may be ſuch a Thing as impious Men for ever puniſhed in Hell*. It is recorded of this ſame *Socrates*, that he has been often known to think for Four and Twenty Hours together, fixed in the ſame Poſture, and wrap'd up in Meditation. *LYS.* Our modern Free-thinkers are a more lively Sort of Men. Thoſe old Philoſophers were moſt of them whimſical. They had in my Judgment a narrow, timorous way of thinking, which by no means came up to the frank Humour of our Times. *CRI.* But I appeal

* Vid. Platon. in Georgia.

to

to your own Judgment, if a Man, who knows not the Nature of the Soul, can be assured by the Light of Reason, whether it is mortal or immortal? DIAL. VI.

An simul intereat nobiscum morte perempta,
An tenebras orci visat vastasque lacunas?

LYS. But what if I know the Nature of the Soul? What if I have been taught that whole Secret by a modern Free-thinker? a Man of Science who discovered it not by a tiresome Introversion of his Faculties, not by amusing himself in a Labyrinth of Notions, or stupidly thinking for whole Days and Nights together, but by looking into Things, and observing the Analogy of Nature.

XIV. This great Man is a Philosopher by Fire, who has made many Processes upon Vegetables. It is his Opinion that Men and Vegetables are really of the same Species; that Animals are moving Vegetables, and Vegetables fixed Animals; that the Mouths of the one and the Roots of the other serve to the same Use, differing only in Position; that Blossoms and Flowers answer to the most indecent and concealed Parts in the humane Body; that Vegetable and Animal Bodies are both

DIAL. VI. alike organized, and that in both there is Life or a certain Motion and Circulation of Juices through proper Tubes or Veſſels. I ſhall never forget this able Man's unfolding the Nature of the Soul in the following manner. The Soul, ſaid he, is that ſpecific Form or Principle from whence proceed the diſtinct Qualities or Properties of Things. Now, as Vegetables are a more ſimple and leſs perfect Compound, and conſequenrly more eaſily analyſed than Animals, we will begin with the Contemplation of the Souls of Vegetables. Know then, that the Soul of any Plant, Roſemary for inſtance, is neither more nor leſs than its eſſential Oil. Upon this depends its peculiar Fragrance, Taſte, and Medicinal Virtues, or in other Words its Life and Operations. Separate or extract this eſſential Oil by Chymic Art, and you get the Soul of the Plant: what remains being a dead Carcaſe, without any one Property or Virtue of the Plant, which is preſerved entire in the Oil, a Drachm whereof goes further than ſeveral Pounds of the Plant. Now this ſame eſſential Oil is it ſelf a Compoſition of Sulphur and Salt, or of a groſs unctuous Subſtance, and a fine ſubtile Principle or volatile Salt impriſoned therein. This volatile Salt is properly the

the Eſſence of the Soul of the Plant, containing all its Virtue, and the Oil is the Vehicle of this moſt ſubtile Part of the Soul, or that which fixes and individuates it. And as, upon Separation of this Oil from the Plant, the Plant died, ſo a ſecond Death or Death of the Soul enſues upon the Reſolution of this eſſential Oil into its Principles; as appears by leaving it expoſed for ſome Time to the open Air, ſo that the volatile Salt or Spirit may fly off; after which the Oil remains dead and inſipid, but without any ſenſible Diminution of its Weight, by the Loſs of that volatile Eſſence of the Soul, that Æthereal Aura, that Spark of Entity; which returns and mixes with the Solar Light, the univerſal Soul of the World, and only Source of Life, whether Vegetable, Animal, or Intellectual; which differ only according to the Groſsneſs or Fineneſs of the Vehicles, and the different Textures of the natural Alembics, or in other Words, the organized Bodies, where the abovementioned volatile Eſſence inhabits and is elaborated, where it acts and is acted upon. This Chymical Syſtem lets you at once into the Nature of the Soul, and accounts for all its Phænomena. In that Compound which is called Man, the Soul or eſſential Oil is what

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DIAL. VI. commonly goes by the Name of Animal Spirit: For you muſt know, it is a Point agreed by Chymiſts, that Spirits are nothing but the more ſubtile Oils. Now in proportion, as the eſſential Oil of the vegetable Man is more ſubtile than that of other Vegetables, the volatile Salt that impregnates it is more at Liberty to act: which accounts for thoſe ſpecific Properties and Actions of Humane Kind, which diſtinguiſh them above other Creatures. Hence you may learn why among the wiſe Ancients, Salt was another Name for Wit, and in our Times a dull Man is ſaid to be inſipid or inſulſe. Aromatic Oils maturated by great Length of Time turn to Salts: this ſhews why Humane Kind grow wiſer by Age. And what I have ſaid of the twofold Death or Diſſolution, firſt of the Compound, by ſeparating the Soul from the organical Body, and ſecondly of the Soul it ſelf, by dividing the volatile Salt from the Oil, illuſtrates and explains that Notion of certain ancient Philoſophers: that as the Man was a Compound of Soul and Body, ſo the Soul was compounded of the Mind or Intellect, and its Æthereal Vehicle: and that the Separation of Soul and Body or Death of the Man is, after a long Tract of Time, ſucceeded by a ſecond

cond Death of the Soul it ſelf; to wit, the Separation or Deliverance of the Intellect from its Vehicle, and Reunion with the Sun. *EUPH.* O *Lyſicles*, your ingenious Friend has opened a new Scene, and explained the moſt obſcure and difficult Points in the cleareſt and eaſieſt Manner. *LYS.* I muſt own this Account of Things ſtruck my Fancy. I am no great Lover of Creeds or Syſtems: but when a Notion is reaſonable and grounded on Experience I know how to value it. *CRI.* In good earneſt, *Lyſicles*, do you believe this Account to be true? *LYS.* Why then in good earneſt I do not know whether I do or no. But I can aſſure you the ingenious Artiſt himſelf has not the leaſt Doubt about it. And to believe an Artiſt in his Art is a juſt Maxim and ſhort Way to Science. *CRI.* But what relation hath the Soul of Man to Chymic Art? The ſame Reaſon, that bids me truſt a skilful Artiſt in his Art, inclines me to ſuſpect him out of his Art. Men are too apt to reduce unknown Things to the Standard of what they know, and bring a Prejudice or Tincture from Things they have been converſant in, to judge thereby of Things in which they have not been converſant. I have known a Fidler gravely teach that the Soul was Harmony; a Geo-

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DIAL. VI. metrician very positive that the Soul must be extended; and a Physician, who having pickled half a Dozen Embryos and dissected as many Rats and Frogs, grew conceited and affirmed there was no Soul at all, and that it was a vulgar Error. *LYS.* My Notions sit easy. I shall not engage in pedantic Disputes about them. They who don't like them may leave them. *EUPH.* This, I suppose, is said much like a Gentleman.

XV. But pray, *Lysicles*, tell me whether the Clergy come within that general Rule of yours: that an Artist may be trusted in his Art? *LYS.* By no Means. *EUPH.* Why so? *LYS.* Because I take my self to know as much of those Matters as they do. *EUPH.* But you allow, that in any other Profession; one who hath spent much Time and Pains may attain more Knowledge, than a Man of equal or better Parts, who never made it his particular Business. *LYS.* I do. *EUPH.* And nevertheless in Things religious and divine you think all Men equally knowing. *LYS.* I do not say all Men. But I think all Men of Sense competent Judges. *EUPH.* What! are the Divine Attributes and Dispensations to Mankind, the true End and Happiness of

of rational Creatures, with the Means of improving and perfecting their Beings, more eaſy and obvious Points than thoſe which make the Subject of every common Profeſſion? *LYS.* Perhaps not: but one Thing I know, ſome Things are ſo manifeſtly abſurd, that no Authority ſhall make me give into them. For inſtance, if all Mankind ſhould pretend to perſuade me that the Son of God was born upon Earth in a poor Family, was ſpit upon, buffeted, and crucified, lived like a Beggar, and died like a Thief, I ſhould never believe one Syllable of it. Common Senſe ſhews every one, what Figure it would be decent for an Earthly Prince or Ambaſſador to make; and the Son of God, upon an Ambaſſy from Heaven, muſt needs have made an Appearance beyond all others of great *eclat*, and in all reſpects the very reverſe of that which Jeſus Chriſt is reported to have made, even by his own Hiſtorians. *EUPH.* O *Lyſicles*, though I had ever ſo much Mind to approve and applaud your ingenious Reaſoning, yet I dare not aſſent to this for fear of *Crito*. *LYS.* Why ſo? *EUPH.* Becauſe he obſerved juſt now, that Men judge of things they do not know, by Prejudices from things they do know. And I fear he would object that you, who have been con-

DIAL. VI. converſant in the *grand Monde*, having your Head filled with a Notion of Attendants and Equipage and Liveries, the familiar Badges of Humane Grandeur, are leſs able to judge of that which is truly Divine: and that one who had ſeen leſs, and thought more, would be apt to imagine a pompous Parade of worldly Greatneſs, not the moſt becoming the Author of a ſpiritual Religion, that was deſigned to wean Men from the World, and raiſe them above it. *CRI.* Do you think, *Lyſicles*, if a Man ſhould make his Entrance into *London* in a rich Suit of Clothes, with a hundred gilt Coaches, and a thouſand laced Footmen; that this would be a more divine Appearance, and have more of true Grandeur in it, than if he had Power with a Word to heal all manner of Diſeaſes, to raiſe the dead to Life, and ſtill the raging of the Winds and Sea? *LYS.* Without all doubt it muſt be very agreeable to common Senſe to ſuppoſe, that he could reſtore others to Life who could not ſave his own. You tell us, indeed, that he roſe again from the dead: but what Occaſion was there for him to die, the juſt for the unjuſt, the Son of God for wicked Men? And why in that individual Place? Why at that very Time above all others? Why did he not

not make his Appearance earlier, and preach in all Parts of the World, that the Benefit might have been more extenſive and equal? Account for all theſe Points and reconcile them, if you can, to the common Notions and plain Senſe of Mankind. *CRI.* And what if thoſe, as well as many other Points, ſhould lie out of the Road that we are acquainted with; muſt we therefore explode them, and make it a Rule to condemn every Proceeding as ſenſeleſs, that doth not ſquare with the vulgar Senſe of Man? That, indeed, which evidently contradicts Senſe and Reaſon you have a Right to disbelieve. And when you are unjuſtly treated you have the ſame Right to complain. But I think you ſhould diſtinguiſh between Matter of Debt and Matter of Favour. Thus much is obſerved in all Intercourſe between Man and Man: wherein Acts of meer Benevolence are never inſiſted on, or examined and meaſured with the ſame accurate Line as Matters of Juſtice. Who but a Minute Philoſopher would, upon a gratuitous Diſtribution of Favours, inquire, why at this Time, and not before? why to theſe Perſons, and not to others? Various are the natural Abilities and Opportunities of Humane Kind. How wide a Difference is there in reſpect of the Law

of

DIAL. VI. of Nature, between one of our ſtupid Plowmen and a Minute Philoſopher! Between a Laplander and an Athenian! That Conduct, therefore, which ſeems to you partial or unequal, may be found as well in the Diſpenſation of Natural Religion as of Revealed, And if ſo, why it ſhould be made an Objection againſt the one more than the other, I leave you to account for the reſt. If the Precepts and certain primary Tenets of Religion appear in the Eye of Reaſon good and uſeful; and if they are alſo found to be ſo by their Effects; we may, for the ſake of them, admit certain other Points or Doctrines recommended with them, to have a good Tendency, to be right and true; although we cannot diſcern their Goodneſs or Truth by the meer Light of Humane Reaſon, which may well be ſuppoſed an inſufficient Judge of the Proceedings, Counſels, and Deſigns of Providence, and this ſufficeth to make our Conviction reaſonable.

XVI. It is an allowed Point that no Man can judge of this or that Part of a Machine taken by it ſelf, without knowing the whole, the mutual Relation or Dependence of its Parts, and the End for which it was made. And, as this is a Point acknowledged in corporeal and natural

tural Things, ought we not by a Parity of Reaſon to ſuſpend our Judgment concerning the moral Fitneſs of a ſingle unaccountable Part of the Divine Oeconomy, till we are more fully acquainted with the moral Syſtem, or World of Spirits, and are let into the Deſigns of God's Providence, and have an extenſive View of his Diſpenſations paſt, preſent, and future? Alas! *Lyſicles*, what do you know even of your ſelf, whence you come, what you are, or whither you are going? To me it ſeems, that a Minute Philoſopher is like a conceited Spectator, who never looked behind the Scenes, and yet would judge of the Machinery; who from a tranſient Glimpſe of a Part only of ſome one Scene, would take upon him to cenſure the Plot of a Play. *LYS.* As to the Plot I won't ſay; but in half a Scene a Man may judge of an abſurd Actor. With what Colour or Pretext can you juſtify the vindictive, froward, whimſical Behaviour of ſome inſpired Teachers or Prophets? Particulars that ſerve neither for Profit nor Pleaſure I make a ſhift to forget: but in general the Truth of this Charge I do very well remember. *CRI.* You need be at no Pains to prove a Point I ſhall neither juſtify nor deny. That there have been Humane Paſſions, Infirmities, and Defects in

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DIAL. VI. Persons inspired by God, I freely own; nay, that very wicked Men have been inspired, as *Balaam*, for instance, and *Caiaphas*, cannot be denied. But what will you infer from thence? Can you prove it impossible, that a weak or sinful Man should become an Instrument to the Spirit of God, for conveying his Purpose to other Sinners, or that Divine Light may not, as well as the Light of the Sun, shine on a foul Vessel without polluting its Rays? *LYS.* To make short Work, the right Way would be to put out our Eyes, and not judge at all. *CRI.* I do not say so, but I think it would be right, if some sanguine Persons upon certain Points suspected their own Judgment. *ALC.* But the very Things said to be inspired, taken by themselves and in their own Nature, are sometimes so wrong, to say no worse, that a Man may pronounce them not to be divine at first Sight; without troubling his Head about the System of Providence or Connexion of Events: As one may say that Grass is green, without knowing or considering how it grows, what Uses it is subservient to, or how it is connected with the mundane System. Thus for instance, the spoiling of the *Ægyptians*, and the Extirpation of the *Canaanites*, every one at first Glance sees to be cruel and unjust, and

and may therefore without deliberating pronounce them unworthy of God. *CRI.* But, *Alciphron*, to judge rightly of these Things, may it not be proper to consider, how long the *Israelites* had wrought under those severe Task-masters of *Egypt*, what Injuries and Hardships they had sustained from them, what Crimes and Abominations the *Canaanites* had been guilty of, what Right God hath to dispose of the Things of this World, to punish Delinquents, and to appoint both the Manner and the Instruments of his Justice? Man, who has not such Right over his Fellow-Creatures, who is himself a Fellow-sinner with them, who is liable to Error as well as Passion, whose Views are imperfect, who is governed more by Prejudice than the Truth of Things, may not improbably deceive himself, when he sets up for a Judge of the Proceedings of the holy, omniscient, impassive Creator and Governor of all Things.

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XVII. *ALC.* Believe me, *Crito*, Men are never so industrious to deceive themselves, as when they engage to defend their Prejudices. You would fain reason us out of all Use of our Reason: Can any Thing be more irrational? To forbid us to reason on the Divine Dispensations, is to suppose,

DIAL. VI. pose, they will not bear the Test of Reason; or, in other Words, that God acts without Reason, which ought not to be admitted, no, not in any single instance: For if in one, why not in another? Whoever, therefore, allows a God, must allow that he always acts reasonably. I will not therefore attribute to him Actions and Proceedings that are unreasonable. He hath given me Reason to judge withal: and I will judge by that unerring Light, lighted from the universal Lamp of Nature. *CRI.* O *Alciphron!* as I frankly own the common Remark to be true, That when a Man is against Reason, it is a shrewd Sign Reason is against him; so I should never go about to dissuade any one, much less one who so well knew the Value of it, from using that noble Talent. On the contrary, upon all Subjects of Moment, in my Opinion, a Man ought to use his Reason; but then, whether it may not be reasonable to use it with some Deference to superior Reason, it will not, perhaps, be amiss to consider. He who hath an exact View of the Measure, and of the Thing to be measured, if he applies the one to the other, may, I grant, measure exactly. But he, who undertakes

takes to measure without knowing either, can be no more exact than he is modest. It may not, nevertheless, be impossible to find a Man, who, having neither an abstract Idea of moral Fitness, nor an adequate Idea of the Divine Oeconomy, shall yet pretend to measure the one by the other. *ALC.* It must surely derogate from the Wisdom of God, to suppose his Conduct cannot bear being inspected, not even by the Twilight of Humane Reason. *EUPH.* You allow, then, God to be wise? *ALC.* I do. *EUPH.* What! infinitely wise? *ALC.* Even infinitely. *EUPH.* His Wisdom, then, far exceeds that of Man. *ALC.* Vastly. *EUPH.* Probably more than the Wisdom of Man, that of a Child. *ALC.* Without all question. *EUPH.* What think you, *Alciphron*, must not the Conduct of a Parent seem very unaccountable to a Child, when its Inclinations are thwarted, when it is put to learn the Letters, when it is obliged to swallow bitter Physic, to part with what it likes, and to suffer, and do, and see many things done contrary to its own Judgment, however reasonable or agreeable to that of others? *ALC.* This I grant. *EUPH.* Will it not therefore follow from hence by a parity of Reason, that

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DIAL. VI. the little Child, Man, when it takes upon it to judge of the Schemes of Parental Providence; and a Thing of Yesterday, to criticise the Oeconomy of the Ancient of Days; will it not follow, I say, that such a Judge, of such Matters, must be apt to make very erroneous Judgments? esteeming those things in themselves unaccountable, which he cannot account for, and concluding of some certain Points, from an appearance of arbitrary Carriage towards him, which is suited to his Infancy and Ignorance, that they are in themselves capricious or absurd, and cannot proceed from a wise, just, and benevolent God. This single Consideration, if duly attended to and applied, would, I verily think, put an end to many conceited Reasonings against Revealed Religion. *ALC.* You would have us then conclude, that things, to our Wisdom unaccountable, may nevertheless proceed from an Abyss of Wisdom which our Line cannot fathom: and that Prospects viewed but in part, and by the broken tinged Light of our Intellects, though to us they may seem disproportionate and monstrous, may nevertheless appear quite otherwise to another Eye, and in a different Situation: In a word, that as Humane Wisdom is but childish Folly, in respect

respect of the Divine, so the Wisdom of God may sometimes seem Foolishness to Man. DIAL. VI.

XVIII. *EUPH.* I would not have you make these Conclusions, unless in reason you ought to make them: But if they are reasonable, why should you not make them? *ALC.* Some things may seem reasonable at one Time, and not at another: And I take this very Apology you make, for Credulity and Superstition, to be one of those Things. When I view it in its Principles, it seems naturally to follow from just Concessions: but when I consider its Consequences, I cannot agree to it. A Man had as good abdicate his Nature, as disclaim the Use of Reason. A Doctrine is unaccountable, therefore it must be Divine! *EUPH.* Credulity and Superstition are Qualities so disagreeable and degrading to Humane Nature, so surely an Effect of Weakness, and so frequently a Cause of Wickedness, that I should be very much surprised to find a just Course of Reasoning lead to them. I can never think that Reason is a blind Guide to Folly, or that there is any Connexion between Truth and Falshood, no more than I can think a Thing's being unaccountable a Proof that it is Divine: Though at the

DIAL. VI. same time I cannot help acknowledging, it follows from your own avow'd Principles, that a Thing's being unaccountable or incomprehensible to our Reason, is no sure Argument to conclude it is not Divine; especially when there are collateral Proofs of its being so. A Child is influenced by the many sensible Effects it hath felt, of Paternal Love and Care and superior Wisdom, to believe and do several things with an implicite Faith and Obedience: And if we in the same manner, from the Truth and Reasonableness which we plainly see in so many Points within our Cognisance, and the Advantages which we experience from the Seed of the Gospel sown in good Ground, were disposed to an implicit Belief of certain other Points, relating to Schemes we do not know, or Subjects to which our Talents are perhaps disproportionate, I am tempted to think it might become our Duty without dishonouring our Reason; which is never so much dishonoured as when it is foiled, and never in more danger of being foiled, than by judging where it hath neither Means nor Right to judge. *LYS.* I would give a good deal to see that ingenious Gamester *Glaucus* have the handling of *Euphranor* one Night at our Club. I own he is a Peg too high for me in some of

of his Notions: But then he is admirable at vindicating Humane Reaſon againſt the Impoſitions of Prieſtcraft. DIAL. VI.

XIX. *ALC.* He would undertake to make it as clear as Day Light, that there was nothing worth a Straw in Chriſtianity, but what every one knew, or might know, as well without as with it, before as ſince *Jeſus Chriſt*. *CRI.* That great Man, it ſeems, teacheth, that common Senſe alone is the Pole-Star, by which Mankind ought to ſteer: and that what is called Revelation muſt be ridiculous, becauſe it is unneceſſary and uſeleſs, the natural Talents of every Man being ſufficient, to make him happy, good, and wiſe, without any further Correſpondence with Heaven either for Light or Aid. *EUPH.* I have already acknowledged how ſenſible I am, that my Situation in this obſcure Corner of the Country deprives me of many Advantages, to be had from the Converſation of ingenious Men in Town. To make my ſelf ſome Amends, I am obliged to converſe with the Dead and my own Thoughts, which laſt I know are of little Weight againſt the Authority of *Glaucus*, or ſuch like great Men in the Minute Philoſophy. But what ſhall we ſay to *Socrates*, for he too was of an Opi-

DIAL. VI. nion very different from that aſcribed to *Glaucus*? *ALC.* For the preſent we need not inſiſt on Authorities, ancient or modern, or inquire which was the greater Man *Socrates* or *Glaucus*. Though, methinks, for ſo much as Authority can ſignify, the preſent Times, gray and hoary with Age and Experience, have a manifeſt Advantage over thoſe that are falſly called *ancient*. But not to dwell on Authorities, I tell you in plain *Engliſh*, *Euphranor*, we do not want your Revelations: and that for this plain Reaſon, thoſe that are clear every Body knew before, and thoſe that are obſcure no Body is the better for. *EUPH.* As it is impoſſible, that a Man ſhould believe the practic Principles of the Chriſtian Religion, and not be the better for them: So it is evident, that thoſe Principles may be much more eaſily taught as Points of Faith, than demonſtrated or diſcovered as Points of Science. This I call evident, becauſe it is plain Fact. Since we daily ſee that many are inſtructed in Matters of Faith; that few are taught by Scientific Demonſtration; and that there are ſtill fewer who can diſcover Truth for themſelves. Did Minute Philoſophers but reflect: How rarely Men are ſway'd or

or governed by meer Ratiocination, and how often by Faith, in the natural, or civil Concerns of the World! how little they know, and how much they believe! How uncommon it is to meet with a Man who argues juſtly, who is in Truth a Maſter of Reaſon, or walks by that Rule! How much better (as the World goes) Men are qualified to judge of Facts than of Reaſonings, to receive Truth upon Teſtimony than to deduce it from Principles! How general a Spirit of Truſt or Reliance runs through the whole Syſtem of Life and Opinion! And at the ſame Time how ſeldom the dry Light of unprejudiced Nature is followed or to be found! I ſay, did our thinking Men but bethink themſelves of theſe Things, they would perhaps find it difficult to aſſign a good Reaſon, why Faith, which hath ſo great a Share in every Thing elſe, ſhould yet have none in Religion. But to come more cloſely to your Point, Whether it was poſſible for Mankind to have known all Parts of the Chriſtian Religion, beſides Myſteries and poſitive Inſtitutions, is not the Queſtion between us; and that they actually did not know them, is too plain to be denied. This, perhaps, was for Want of making a due Uſe of Reaſon. But, as to the Uſefulneſs of Revelation,

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DIAL. VI. it ſeems much the ſame Thing whether they could not know, or would not be at the Pains to know, the Doctrines Revealed. And as for thoſe Doctrines which were too obſcure to penetrate, or too ſublime to reach, by Natural Reaſon; how far Mankind may be the better for them is more, I had almoſt ſaid, than even you or *Glaucus* can tell.

XX. *ALC.* But whatever may be pretended as to obſcure Doctrines and Diſpenſations, all this hath nothing to do with Prophecies; which, being altogether relative to Mankind, and the Events of this World, to which our Faculties are ſurely well enough proportioned, one might expect ſhould be very clear, and ſuch as might inform inſtead of puzzling us. *EUPH.* And yet it muſt be allowed that as ſome Prophecies are clear, there are others very obſcure: but left to my ſelf, I doubt I ſhould never have inferred from thence that they were not Divine. In my own way of thinking I ſhould have been apt to conclude, that the Prophecies we underſtand are a Proof for Inſpiration: but that thoſe we do not underſtand are no Proof againſt it. Inaſmuch as for the latter our Ignorance or the Reſerve of the Holy Spirit may account: but for the other

other Nothing, for ought that I ſee, can account but Inſpiration. *ALC.* Now I know ſeveral ſagacious Men, who conclude very differently from you, to wit, that the one Sort of Prophecies are Nonſenſe, and the other contrived after the Events. Behold the Difference between a Man of free Thought and one of narrow Principles! *EUPH.* It ſeems then they reject the Revelations becauſe they are obſcure, and *Daniel*'s Prophecies becauſe they are clear. *ALC.* Either way a Man of Senſe ſees Cauſe to ſuſpect there has been foul Play. *EUPH.* Your Men of Senſe are, it ſeems, hard to pleaſe. *ALC.* Our Philoſophers are Men of piercing Eyes. *EUPH.* I ſuppoſe ſuch Men never make tranſient Judgments from tranſient Views, but always eſtabliſh fixed Concluſions upon a thorough Inſpection of Things. For my own part, I dare not engage with a Man, who has examined thoſe Points ſo nicely, as it may be preſumed you have done: But I could name ſome eminent Writers of our own, now living, whoſe Books on the Subject of Prophecy have given great Satisfaction to Gentlemen, who paſs for Men of Senſe and Learning, here in the Country. *ALC.* You muſt know, *Euphranor*, I am not at Leiſure to peruſe the learned Writings of Di-

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DIAL. VI. Divines, on a Subject which a Man may ſee through with half an Eye. To me it is ſufficient, that the Point it ſelf is odd and out of the Road of Nature. For the reſt, I leave them to diſpute and ſettle among themſelves, where to fix the preciſe Time when the Sceptre departed from *Judah*: or whether in *Daniel*'s Prophecy of the *Meſſiah* we ſhould compute by the *Chaldæan* or the *Julian* Year. My only Concluſion concerning all ſuch Matters is, that I will never trouble my ſelf about them. *EUPH.* To an extraordinary Genius, who ſees Things with half an Eye, I know not what to ſay: But for the reſt of Mankind, one would think it ſhould be very raſh in them to conclude, without much and exact Inquiry, on the unſafe Side of a Queſtion which concerns their chief Intereſt. *ALC.* Mark it well: a true Genius in purſuit of Truth makes ſwift Advances on the Wings of general Maxims, while little Minds creep and grovel amidſt mean Particularities. I lay it down for a certain Truth: that by the fallacious Arts of Logic and Criticiſm, ſtraining and forcing, palliating, patching and diſtinguiſhing, a Man may juſtify or make out any Thing: and this Remark, with one or two about Prejudice, ſaves me a world of Trouble. *EUPH.* You

Alci-

Alciphron, who ſoar ſublime on ſtrong and free Pinions, vouchſafe to lend a helping Hand to thoſe whom you behold entangled in the Birdlime of Prejudice. For my part, I find it very poſſible to ſuppoſe Prophecy may be Divine, although there ſhould be ſome Obſcurity at this Diſtance, with reſpect to Dates of Time or Kinds of Years. You your ſelf own Revelation poſſible: and allowing this I can very eaſily conceive it may be odd, and out of the Road of Nature. I can, without Amazement, meet in Holy Scripture divers Prophecies, whereof I do not ſee the Completion, divers Texts I do not underſtand, divers Myſteries above my Comprehenſion, and Ways of God to me unaccountable. Why may not ſome Prophecies relate to Parts of Hiſtory I am not well enough acquainted with, or to Events not yet come to paſs? It ſeems to me that Prophecies unfathomed by the Hearer, or even the Speaker himſelf, have been afterward verified and underſtood in the Event: and it is one of my Maxims, That, *what hath been may be.* Though I rub mine Eyes, and do mine utmoſt to extricate my ſelf from Prejudice, yet it ſtill ſeems very poſſible to me, that, what I do not, a more acute, more attentive, or more learned Man may underſtand: DIAL. VI.

DIAL. VI. derſtand: At leaſt thus much is plain: the Difficulty of ſome Points or Paſſages doth not hinder the Clearneſs of others: and thoſe Parts of Scripture which we cannot interpret, we are not bound to know the Senſe of. What Evil or what Inconvenience, if we cannot comprehend what we are not obliged to comprehend, or if we cannot account for thoſe Things which it doth not belong to us to account for? Scriptures not underſtood, at one Time, or by one Perſon, may be underſtood at another Time, or by other Perſons. May we not perceive, by Retroſpect on what is paſt, a certain Progreſs from darker to lighter, in the Series of the Divine Oeconomy towards Man? And may not future Events clear up ſuch Points as at preſent exerciſe the Faith of Believers? Now, I cannot help thinking (ſuch is the Force either of Truth or Prejudice) that in all this, there is nothing ſtrained or forced, or which is not reaſonable and natural to ſuppoſe.

XXI. *ALC.* Well, *Euphranor*, I will lend you a helping Hand, ſince you deſire it, but think fit to alter my Method: For you muſt know, the main Points of Chriſtian Belief have been infuſed ſo early, and inculcated ſo often, by Nurſes, Pæda-

Pædagogues, and Prieſts: that, be the Proofs ever ſo plain, it is a hard Matter to convince a Mind thus tinctured and ſtained, by arguing againſt Revealed Religion from its internal Characters, I ſhall therefore ſet my ſelf to conſider Things in another Light, and examine your Religion by certain external Characters or Circumſtantials, comparing the Syſtem of Revelation with collateral Accounts of ancient Heathen Writers, and ſhewing how ill it conſiſts with them. Know then, that the Chriſtian Revelation ſuppoſing the *Jewiſh*, it follows, that if the *Jewiſh* be deſtroyed, the Chriſtian muſt of Courſe fall to the Ground. Now, to make ſhort Work, I ſhall attack this *Jewiſh* Revelation in its Head. Tell me, are we not obliged, if we believe the *Moſaic* Account of Things, to hold the World was created not quite ſix thouſand Years ago? *EUPH.* I grant we are. *ALC.* What will you ſay now, if other ancient Records carry up the Hiſtory of the World many thouſand Years beyond this Period? What if the *Ægyptians* and *Chineſe* have Accounts extending to thirty or forty thouſand Years? What if the former of theſe Nations have obſerved twelve hundred Eclipſes, during the ſpace of forty eight thouſand Years, before the Time of *Alexander* DIAL. VI.

DIAL. VI. *ander* the Great? What if the *Chineſe* have alſo many Obſervations antecedent to the *Jewiſh* Account of the Creation? What if the *Chaldæans* had been obſerving the Stars for above four hundred thouſand Years? And what ſhall we ſay if we have Succeſſions of Kings and their Reigns, marked for ſeveral thouſand Years before the Beginning of the World, aſſigned by *Moſes?* Shall we reject the Accounts and Records of all other Nations, the moſt famous, ancient, and learned in the World, and preſerve a blind Reverence for the Legiſlator of the *Jews? EUPH.* And pray if they deſerve to be rejected, why ſhould we not reject them? What if thoſe monſtrous Chronologies contain nothing but Names without Actions and manifeſt Fables? What if thoſe pretended Obſervations of *Ægyptians* and *Chaldæans* were unknown or unregarded by ancient Aſtronomers? What if the *Jeſuits* have ſhewn the Inconſiſtency of the like *Chineſe* Pretenſions with the Truth of *Ephemerides*? What if the moſt ancient *Chineſe* Obſervations allow'd to be authentic, are thoſe of two fixed Stars, one in the Winter Solſtice, the other in the Vernal Equinox, in the Reign of their King *Yao*, which was ſince the Flood *? *ALC.*

* Bianchini Hiſtor. Univerſ. c. 17.

You

You must give me Leave to observe, the *Romish* Missionaries are of small Credit in this Point. *EUPH.* But what Knowledge have we, or can we have, of those *Chinese* Affairs, but by their Means? The same Persons that tell us of these Accounts refute them: if we reject their Authority in one Case, what Right have we to build upon it in another? *ALC.* When I consider that the *Chinese* have Annals of more than forty thousand Years, and that they are a learned ingenious and acute People, very curious and addicted to Arts and Sciences, I profess I cannot help paying some Regard to their Accounts of Time. *EUPH.* Whatever Advantage their Situation and political Maxims may have given them, it doth not appear they are so learned or so acute in point of Science as the *Europeans.* The general Character of the *Chinese*, if we may believe *Trigaltius* and other Writers, is that they are Men of a trifling and credulous Curiosity, addicted to search after the Philosophers Stone, and a Medicine to make Men immortal, to Astrology, Fortune-telling, and Presages of all Kinds. Their Ignorance in Nature and Mathematics is evident, from the great Hand the *Jesuits* make of that Kind of Knowledge among them. But what shall we think of those extraordinary Annals,

DIAL. VI. nals, if the very *Chineſe* themſelves give no Credit to them for more than three thouſand Years before *Jeſus Chriſt?* If they do not pretend to have begun to write Hiſtory above four thouſand Years ago? And if the oldeſt Books they have now extant in an intelligible Character, are not above two thouſand Years old? One would think a Man of your Sagacity, ſo apt to ſuſpect every Thing out of the common Road of Nature, ſhould not without the cleareſt Proof admit thoſe Annals for authentic, which record ſuch ſtrange Things as the Sun's not ſetting for ten Days, and Gold raining three Days together. Tell me, *Alciphron*, can you really believe theſe Things without inquiring by what Means the Tradition was preſerved, through what Hands it paſſed, or what Reception it met with, or who firſt committed it to Writing? *ALC.* To omit the *Chineſe* and their Story, it will ſerve my Purpoſe as well to build on the Authority of *Manetho* that learned *Ægyptian* Prieſt, who had ſuch Opportunities of ſearching into the moſt ancient Accounts of Time, and copying into his Dynaſties the moſt venerable and authentic Records inſcribed on the Pillars of *Hermes*. *EUPH.* Pray, *Alciphron*, where were thoſe Chronological Pillars

to

to be seen? *ALC.* In the *Seriadical* Land. DIAL. VI.
EUPH. And where is that Country? *ALC.* I don't know. *EUPH.* How were those Records preserved for so many Ages down to the Time of this *Hermes*, who is said to have been the first Inventor of Letters? *ALC.* I do not know. *EUPH.* Did any other Writers, before or since *Manetho*, pretend to have seen, or transcribed, or known any Thing about these Pillars? *ALC.* Not that I know. *EUPH.* Or about the Place where they are said to have been? *ALC.* If they did, it is more than I know. *EUPH.* Do the *Greek* Authors that went into *Ægypt*, and consulted the *Ægyptian* Priests, agree with these Accounts of *Manetho?* *ALC.* Suppose they do not. *EUPH.* Doth *Diodorus*, who lived since *Manetho*, follow, cite, or so much as mention this same *Manetho?* *ALC.* What will you infer from all this? *EUPH.* If I did not know you and your Principles, and how vigilantly you guard against Imposture, I should infer that you were a very credulous Man. For what can we call it but Credulity to believe most incredible things on most slender Authority, such as Fragments of an obscure Writer, disagreeing with all other Historians, supported by an obscure Authority of *Hermes*'s Pillars,

DIAL. VI. for which you must take his Word, and which contain Things so improbable as Successions of Gods and Demi-gods, for many thousand Years, *Vulcan* alone having reigned nine Thousand? There is little in these venerable Dynasties of *Manetho*, besides Names and Numbers: and yet in that little we meet with very strange Things, that would be thought Romantick in another Writer: For instance, the *Nile* overflowing with Honey, the Moon grown bigger, a speaking Lamb, seventy Kings who reigned as many Days one after another, a King a Day *. If you are known, *Alciphron*, to give credit to these Things, I fear you will lose the Honour of being thought incredulous. *ALC.* And yet these ridiculous Fragments, as you would represent them, have been thought worth the Pains and Lucubrations of very learned Men. How can you account for the Work that the great *Joseph Scaliger* and Sir *John Marsham* make about them? *EUPH.* I do not pretend to account for it. To see *Scaliger* add another *Julian* Period to make room for such Things as *Manetho*'s Dynasties, and Sir *John Marsham* take so much learned Pains to piece, patch, and mend those obscure Fragments, to range them in Synchronisms,

* Scal. Can. Isag. l. 2.

and try to adjuſt them with ſacred Chro- DIAL.
nology, or make them conſiſtent with VI.
themſelves and other Accounts, is to me very ſtrange and unaccountable. Why they, or *Euſebius*, or your ſelf, or any other learned Man ſhould imagine thoſe Things deſerve any Regard I leave you to explain.

XXII. *ALC.* After all it is not eaſy to conceive what ſhould move, not only *Manetho*, but alſo other *Ægyptian* Prieſts, long before his Time, to ſet up ſuch great Pretences to Antiquity, all which, however differing one from another, agree in this, that they overthrow the *Moſaic* Hiſtory. How can this be accounted for without ſome real Foundation? What Point of Pleaſure, or Profit, or Power, could ſet Men on forging Succeſſions of ancient Names, and Periods of Time for Ages before the World began? *EUPH.* Pray, *Alciphron*, is there any Thing ſo ſtrange or ſingular in this vain Humour of extending the Antiquity of Nations beyond the Truth? Hath it not been obſerved in moſt Parts of the World? Doth it not even in our own Times ſhew it ſelf, eſpecially among thoſe dependent and ſubdued People, who have little elſe to boaſt of. To paſs over others of our

DIAL. VI. Fellow-Subjects, who, in proportion as they are below their Neighbours in Wealth and Power, lay claim to a more remote Antiquity; are not the Pretenſions of *Iriſhmen* in this Way known to be very great? If I may truſt my Memory O *Flaherty*, in his Ogygia, mentions ſome Tranſactions in *Ireland* before the Flood. The ſame Humour, and from the ſame Cauſe, appears to have prevailed in *Sicily*, a Country, for ſome Centuries paſt, ſubject to the Dominion of Foreigners: during which Time, the *Sicilians* have publiſhed divers fabulous Accounts, concerning the Original and Antiquity of their Cities, wherein they vye with each other. It is pretended to be proved by ancient Inſcriptions, whoſe Exiſtence or Authority ſeems on a Level with that of *Hermes*'s Pillars, that *Palermo* was founded in the Days of the Patriarch *Iſaac* by a Colony of *Hebrews*, *Phœnicians*, and *Syrians*, and that a Grandſon of *Eſau* had been Governor of a Tower ſubſiſting within theſe two hundred Years in that City *. The Antiquity of *Meſſina* hath been carried ſtill higher, by ſome who would have us think it was enlarged by *Nimrod* †. The like Pretenſions are made by *Catania*, and

* Fazelli Hiſt. Sicul. decad. 1. l. 8.

† Reina Notizie Iſtoriche di Meſſina.

other

other Towns of that Iſland, who have found Authors of as good Credit as *Manetho* to ſupport them. Now I ſhould be glad to know why the *Ægyptians*, a ſubdued People, may not probably be ſuppoſed to have invented fabulous Accounts from the ſame Motive, and like others valued themſelves on extravagant Pretenſions to Antiquity, when in all other Reſpects they were ſo much inferior to their Maſters? That People had been ſucceſſively conquered by *Æthiopians*, *Aſſyrians*, *Babylonians*, *Perſians*, and *Grecians*, before it appears that thoſe wonderful Dynaſties of *Manetho* and the Pillars of *Hermes* were ever heard of; as they had been by the two firſt of thoſe Nations before the Time of *Solon* himſelf, the earlieſt *Greek* that is known to have conſulted the Prieſts of *Ægypt*: Whoſe Accounts were ſo extravagant that even the *Greek* Hiſtorians, though unacquainted with Holy Scripture, were far from giving an intire Credit to them. *Herodotus* making a Report upon their Authority, ſaith, Thoſe to whom ſuch Things ſeem credible may make the beſt of them, for himſelf declaring that it was his Purpoſe to write what he heard *. And both he and *Diodorus* do, on divers Occaſions,

DIAL. VI.

* Herodotus in Euterpe.

DIAL. VI. ſhew the ſame Diffidence in the Narratives of thoſe *Ægyptian* Prieſts. And as we obſerved of the *Ægyptians*, it is no leſs certain that the *Phœnicians*, *Aſſyrians*, and *Chaldæans* were each a conquered and reduced People, before the reſt of the World appear to have heard any Thing of their Pretenſions to ſo remote Antiquity. *CRI.* But what Occaſion is there to be at any Pains to account for the Humour of fabulous Writers? Is it not ſufficient to ſee that they relate Abſurdities: that they are unſupported by any foreign Evidence: that they do not appear to have been in Credit, even among their own Countrymen, and that they are inconſiſtent one with another? That Men ſhould have the Vanity to impoſe on the World by falſe Accounts, is nothing ſtrange: it is much more ſo, that after what hath been done towards undeceiving the World by ſo many learned Critics, there ſhould be Men found capable of being abuſed by thoſe paltry Scraps of *Manetho*, *Beroſus*, *Cteſias*, or the like fabulous or counterfeit Writers. *ALC.* Give me Leave to obſerve, thoſe learned Critics may prove to be Eccleſiaſtics, perhaps ſome of them Papiſts. *CRI.* What do you think of Sir *Iſaac Newton*, was he either Papiſt or Eccleſiaſtic? Perhaps

haps you may not allow him to have been in Sagacity, or Force of Mind, equal to the great Men of the Minute Philoſophy: But it cannot be denied that he had read and thought much upon the Subject, and that the Reſult of his Inquiry was a perfect Contempt of all thoſe celebrated Rivals to *Moſes*. *ALC.* It hath been obſerved by ingenious Men, that Sir *Iſaac Newton*, though a Layman, was deeply prejudiced, witneſs his great Regard to the Bible. *CRI.* And the ſame may be ſaid of Mr. *Locke*, Mr. *Boyle*, Lord *Bacon*, and other famous Laymen, who, however knowing in ſome Points, muſt nevertheleſs be allowed not to have attained that keen Diſcernment, which is the peculiar Diſtinction of your Sect. DIAL. VI.

XXIII. But perhaps there may be other Reaſons beſide Prejudice, to incline a Man to give *Moſes* the Preference, on the Truth of whoſe Hiſtory the Government, Manners, and Religion of his Countrymen were founded and framed; of whoſe Hiſtory there are manifeſt Traces in the moſt ancient Books and Traditions of the *Gentiles*, particularly of the *Brachmans* and *Perſees*; whoſe Hiſtory is confirmed by the late Invention of Arts

DIAL. VI. and Sciences, the gradual Peopling of the World, the very Names of ancient Nations, and even by the Authority and Arguments of that renowned Philoſopher *Lucretius*, who, on other Points, is ſo much admired and followed by thoſe of your Sect. Not to mention that the continual Decreaſe of Fluids, the Sinking of Hills, and the Retardation of Planetary Motions afford ſo many natural Proofs, which ſhew this World had a Beginning; as the Civil or Hiſtorical Proofs abovementioned do plainly point out this Beginning, to have been about the Time aſſigned in Holy Scripture. After all which I beg Leave to add one Obſervation more. To any one who conſiders that, on digging into the Earth, ſuch Quantities of Shells, and, in ſome Places, Bones and Horns of Animals are found, ſound and intire after having lain there in all Probability ſome thouſands of Years; it ſhould ſeem probable, that Gems, Medals, and Implements in Metal or Stone, might have laſted intire, buried under Ground forty or fifty thouſand Years, if the World had been ſo old, How comes it then to paſs that no Remains are found, no Antiquities of thoſe numerous Ages preceding the Scripture Accounts of Time; no Fragments of Buildings, no

publick Monuments, no Intaglias, Cam- DIAL.
meoes, Statues, Baſſo Relievos, Medals, VI.
Inſcriptions, Utenſils, or Artificial Works
of any kind are ever diſcovered, which might bear Teſtimony to the Exiſtence of thoſe mighty Empires, thoſe Succeſſions of Monarchs, Heroes, and Demi-gods, for ſo many thouſand Years? Let us look forward and ſuppoſe ten or twenty thouſand Years to come; during which Time we will ſuppoſe, that Plagues, Famines, Wars, and Earthquakes ſhall have made great Havock in the World; is it not highly probable that at the End of ſuch Period, Pillars, Vaſes, and Statues now in being of Granite, or Porphyry, or Jaſper, (Stones of ſuch Hardneſs, as we know them to have laſted two thouſand Years above Ground, without any conſiderable Alteration) would bear Record of theſe and paſt Ages? Or, that ſome of our current Coins might then be dug up, or old Walls and the Foundations of Buildings ſhew themſelves, as well as the Shells and Stones of the Primæval World are preſerved down to our Times? To me it ſeems to follow from theſe Conſiderations, which common Senſe and Experience make all Men Judges of, that we may ſee good Reaſon to conclude, the World was created about the Time recorded in Holy

DIAL. VI. Holy Scripture. And if we admit a Thing ſo extraordinary as the Creation of this World, it ſhould ſeem that we admit ſomething ſtrange, and odd, and new to Humane Apprehenſion, beyond any other Miracle whatſoever.

XXIV. *Alciphron* ſate muſing and made no Anſwer, whereupon *Lyſicles* expreſſed himſelf in the following Manner. I muſt own I ſhould rather ſuppoſe with *Lucretius*, that the World was made by Chance, and that Men grew out of the Earth, like Pompions, than pin my Faith on thoſe wretched fabulous Fragments of Oriental Hiſtory. And as for the learned Men, who have taken pains to illuſtrate and piece them together, they appear to me no better than ſo many muſty Pedants. An ingenious Free-thinker may, perhaps, now and then make ſome Uſe of their Lucubrations, and play one Abſurdity againſt another. But you are not, therefore, to think, he pays any real Regard to the Authority of ſuch apocryphal Writers, or believes one Syllable of the *Chineſe*, *Babylonian*, or *Ægyptian* Traditions. If we ſeem to give them a Preference before the Bible, it is only becauſe they are not eſtabliſhed by Law. This is my plain Senſe of the Matter, and I dare ſay it is the general Senſe of our Sect; who are

too

too rational to be in earneſt on ſuch Trifles, DIAL.
though they ſometimes give Hints of deep VI.
Erudition, and put on a grave Face to
divert themſelves with Bigots. *ALC.*
Since *Lyſicles* will have it ſo, I am content not to build on Accounts of Time preceding the *Moſaic*. I muſt nevertheleſs beg Leave to obſerve, there is another Point of a different Nature, againſt which there do not lie the ſame Exceptions, that deſerves to be conſidered, and may ſerve our Purpoſe as well. I preſume it will be allowed that Hiſtorians, treating of Times within the *Moſaic* Account, ought by impartial Men to be placed on the ſame Foot with *Moſes*. It may therefore be expected, that thoſe, who pretend to vindicate his Writings, ſhould reconcile them with parallel Accounts of other Authors, treating of the ſame Times, Things, and Perſons. And, if we are not attached ſingly to *Moſes*, but take our Notions from other Writers, and the Probability of Things, we ſhall ſee good Cauſe to believe, the *Jews* were only a Crew of leprous *Ægyptians*, driven from their Country on Account of that loathſome Diſtemper: and that their Religion, pretended to have been delivered from Heaven at Mount *Sinai*, was in Truth learned in *Ægypt*, and brought from thence.

CRI.

DIAL. VI. *CRI.* Not to inſiſt, on what cannot be denied, that an Hiſtorian writing of his own Times is to be believed, before others who treat of the ſame Subject ſeveral Ages after, it ſeems to me that it is abſurd to expect we ſhould reconcile *Moſes* with profane Hiſtorians, till you have firſt reconcil'd them one with another. In anſwer therefore to what you obſerve, I deſire you would conſider in the firſt Place, that *Manetho*, *Chæremon*, and *Lyſimachus* had publiſhed inconſiſtent Accounts of the *Jews*, and their going forth from *Ægypt* *: In the ſecond place, that their Language is a plain Proof they were not of *Ægyptian*, but either of *Phœnician*, of *Syrian*, or of *Chaldæan* Original: and in the third place, that it doth not ſeem very probable to ſuppoſe, their Religion, the Baſis or Fundamental Principle of which was the Worſhip of one only Supreme God, and the principal Deſign of which was to aboliſh Idolatry, could be derived from *Ægypt*, the moſt Idolatrous of all Nations. It muſt be owned, the ſeparate Situation and Inſtitutions of the *Jews*, occaſioned their being treated by ſome Foreigners, with great Ignorance and Contempt of them and their Original. But *Strabo*, who is allowed to have been a

* Joſeph. contra Apion. l. 1.

judicious

judicious and inquisitive Writer, though he was not acquainted with their true History, makes more honourable mention of them. He relates that *Moses*, with many other Worshippers of one infinite God, not approving the Image Worship of the *Ægyptians* and other Nations, went out from *Ægypt* and settled in *Jerusalem*, where they built a Temple to one only God without Images*. DIAL. VI.

XXV. *ALC.* We who assert the Cause of Liberty against Religion, in these later Ages of the World, lie under great Disadvantages, from the Loss of ancient Books, which cleared up many Points to the Eyes of those great Men, *Celsus*, *Porphyry*, and *Julian*, which at a greater Distance and with less Help cannot so easily be made out by us: but, had we those Records, I doubt not we might demolish the whole System at once. *CRI.* And yet I make some Doubt of this; because those great Men, as you call them, with all those Advantages could not do it. *ALC.* That must needs have been owing to the Dulness and Stupidity of the World in those Days, when the Art of Reasoning was not so much known and cultivated as of late: But those Men of true Genius saw through

* Strab. l. 16.

the

DIAL. VI. the Deceit themſelves, and were very clear in their Opinion, which convinces me they had good reaſon on their Side. *CRI.* And yet that great Man *Celſus* ſeems to have had very ſlight and inconſtant Notions: one while, he talks like a thorough *Epicurean*; another, he admits Miracles, Prophecies, and a future State of Rewards and Puniſhments. What think you, *Alciphron*, is it not ſomething capricious in ſo great a Man, among other Advantages which he aſcribes to Brutes above Humane Kind, to ſuppoſe they are Magicians and Prophets; that they have a nearer Commerce and Union with the Divinity; that they know more than Men; and that Elephants, in particular, are of all others moſt religious Animals and ſtrict Obſervers of an Oath*. *ALC.* A great Genius will be ſometimes whimſical. But what do you ſay to the Emperor *Julian*, was not he an extraordinary Man? *CRI.* He ſeems by his Writings to have been lively and ſatyrical. Further, I make no Difficulty of owning that he was a generous, temperate, gallant, and facetious Emperor: But at the ſame time it muſt be allowed, becauſe his own Heathen Panegyriſt *Ammianus Marcellinus* † allows it, that he was

* Origen. contra Celſum. l. 4.
† Am. Marcellin. l. 25.

a prat-

a prating, light, vain, superstitious Sort of Man. And therefore his Judgment or Authority can be but of small Weight with those, who are not prejudiced in his Favour. *ALC.* But of all the great Men who wrote against Revealed Religion, the greatest without question was that truly great Man *Porphyry*, the Loss of whose invaluable Work can never be sufficiently lamented. This profound Philosopher went to the Bottom and Original of Things. He most learnedly confuted the Scriptures, shew'd the Absurdity of the *Mosaic* Accounts, undermined and exposed the Prophecies, and ridiculed allegorical Interpretations *. The Moderns, it must be owned, have done great Things and shewn themselves able Men: yet I cannot but regret the Loss of what was done by a Person of such vast Abilities, and who lived so much nearer the Fountain-head; though his Authority survives his Writings, and must still have its Weight with impartial Men, in spite of the Enemies of Truth. *CRI. Porphyry*, I grant, was a thorough Infidel, though he appears by no means to have been incredulous. It seems he had a great Opinion of Wizards and Necromancers, and be-

DIAL. VI.

* Luc. Holstenius de vita & scriptis Porphyrii.

lieved

DIAL. VI. lieved the Myſteries, Miracles, and Prophecies of *Theurgiſts* and *Ægyptian* Prieſts. He was far from being an Enemy to obſcure Jargon, and pretended to extraordinary Extaſies. In a word, this great Man appears to have been as unintelligible as a Schoolman, as ſuperſtitious as a Monk, and as fanatical as any Quietiſt or Quaker: and, to compleat his Character as a Minute Philoſopher, he was under ſtrong Temptations to lay violent Hands on himſelf. We may frame a Notion of this Patriarch of Infidelity, by his judicious Way of thinking upon other Points as well as the Chriſtian Religion. So ſagacious was he as to find out, that the Souls of Inſects, when ſeparated from their Bodies, become rational: that Dæmons of a thouſand Shapes aſſiſt in making Philtrums and Charms, whoſe ſpiritual Bodies are nouriſhed and fattened by the Streams of Libations and Sacrifices: That the Ghoſts of thoſe, who died violent Deaths, uſe to haunt and appear about their Sepulchres. This ſame egregious Philoſopher adviſeth a wiſe Man not to eat Fleſh, leſt the impure Soul of the Brute that was put to violent Death ſhould enter, along with the Fleſh, into thoſe who eat it. He adds, as a Mat-

a Matter of Fact confirmed by many Experiments, that those who would insinuate into themselves the Souls of such Animals, as have the Gift of foretelling Things to come, need only eat a principal Part, the Heart, for instance, of a Stag or a Mole, and so receive the Soul of the Animal, which will prophesy in them like a God *. No wonder if Men whose Minds were preoccupied by Faith and Tenets of such a peculiar Kind, should be averse from the Reception of the Gospel. Upon the whole, we desire to be excused if we do not pay the same Deference to the Judgment of Men, that appear to us whimsical, superstitious, weak, and visionary, which those impartial Gentlemen do, who admire their Talents, and are proud to tread in their Footsteps. *ALC.* Men see Things in different Views: what one admires another contemns: it is even possible for a prejudiced Mind, whose Attention is turned towards the Faults and Blemishes of Things, to fansy some Shadow of Defect in those great Lights, which in our own Days have enlightened, and still continue to enlighten the World.

DIAL. VI.

* Vide Porphyrium de abstinentia, de sacrificiis, de diis, & dæmonibus.

DIAL. VI. XXVI. But pray tell me, *Crito*, what you think of *Joſephus?* He is allowed to have been a Man of Learning and Judgment. He was himſelf an Aſſerter of Revealed Religion. And Chriſtians, when his Authority ſerves their Turn, are uſed to cite him with Reſpect. *CRI.* All this I acknowledge. *ALC.* Muſt it not then ſeem very ſtrange, and very ſuſpicious to every impartial Inquirer, that this learned *Jew* writing the Hiſtory of his own Country, of that very Place, and thoſe very Times, where and when *Jeſus Chriſt* made his Appearance, ſhould yet ſay nothing of the Character, Miracles, and Doctrine of that Extraordinary Perſon? Some ancient Chriſtians were ſo ſenſible of this, that, to make amends, they inſerted a famous Paſſage in that Hiſtorian; which Impoſture hath been ſufficiently detected by able Critics in the laſt Age. *CRI.* Though there are not wanting able Critics on the other ſide of the Queſtion, yet, not to enter upon the Diſcuſſion of that celebrated Paſſage, I am content to give you all you can deſire, and ſuppoſe it not genuine, but the pious Fraud of ſome wrong-headed Chriſtian, who could not brook the Omiſſion in *Joſephus:* But this will never make ſuch Omiſſion a real Objection againſt Chriſtianity. Nor is there, for

for ought I can ſee, any thing in it where- DIAL.
on to ground either Admiration or Suſ- VI.
picion; inaſmuch as it ſhould ſeem very
natural, ſuppoſing the Goſpel Account ex-
actly true, for *Joſephus* to have ſaid no-
thing of it; conſidering that the View of
that Writer was to give his Country ſome
Figure in the Eye of the World, which
had been greatly prejudiced againſt the
Jews, and knew little of their Hiſtory,
to which end the Life and Death of our
Saviour would not in any wiſe have con-
duced; conſidering that *Joſephus* could
not have been an Eye-Witneſs of our Sa-
viour, or his Miracles; conſidering that he
was a *Phariſee* of Quality and Learning,
foreign as well as *Jewiſh*, one of great Em-
ployment in the State, and that the Goſ-
pel was preached to the Poor; that the
firſt Inſtruments of ſpreading it, and the
firſt Converts to it were mean and illite-
rate, that it might not ſeem the Work of
Man, or beholden to Humane Intereſt or
Power; conſidering the general Prejudice
of the *Jews*, who expected in the *Meſſiah*
a temporal and conquering Prince; which
Prejudice was ſo ſtrong, that they choſe
rather to attribute our Saviour's Miracles
to the Devil, than to acknowledge him to
be the Chriſt: Conſidering alſo the helliſh
Diſorder and Confuſion of the *Jewiſh*

DIAL. VI. State in the Days of *Joſephus:* when Mens Minds were filled and aſtoniſhed with unparallel'd Wars, Diſſenſions, Maſſacres, and Seditions of that devoted People. Laying all theſe things together, I do not think it ſtrange, that ſuch a Man, writing with ſuch a View, at ſuch a Time, and in ſuch Circumſtances, ſhould omit to deſcribe our Bleſſed Saviour's Life and Death, or to mention his Miracles, or to take notice of the State of the Chriſtian Church, which was then as a Grain of Muſtard-Seed, beginning to take Root and germinate. And this will ſeem ſtill leſs ſtrange, if it be conſidered, that the Apoſtles in a few Years after our Saviour's Death departed from *Jeruſalem*, ſetting themſelves to convert the *Gentiles*, and were diſperſed throughout the World; that the Converts in *Jeruſalem* were, not only of the meaneſt of the People, but alſo few; the three thouſand, added to the Church in one Day upon *Peter*'s preaching in that City, appearing to have been not Inhabitants but Strangers from all parts aſſembled to celebrate the Feaſt of *Pentecoſt*; and that all the Time of *Joſephus*, and for ſeveral Years after, during a Succeſſion of fifteen Biſhops, the Chriſtians at *Jeruſalem* obſerved the *Moſaic* Law*, and were conſe-

* Sulp. Sever. Sacr. Hiſt. l. 2. & Euſeb. Chron. lib. poſter.

quently,

quently, in outward Appearance, one Peo- DIAL.
ple with the reſt of the *Jews*, which muſt VI.
have made them leſs obſervable. I would
fain know what Reaſon we have to ſup-
poſe, that the Goſpel, which in its firſt
Propagation ſeemed to overlook the great
or conſiderable Men of this World, might
not alſo have been overlooked by them,
as a thing not ſuited to their Apprehen-
ſions and way of thinking? Beſides, in
thoſe early Times might not other learned
Jews, as well as † *Gamaliel*, ſuſpend their
Judgment of this new way, as not know-
ing what to make or ſay of it, being on
one hand unable to quit the Notions and
Traditions in which they were brought
up, and, on the other, not daring to reſiſt
or ſpeak againſt the Goſpel, leſt they ſhould
be found to fight againſt God? Surely at
all Events, it could never be expected,
that an unconverted *Jew* ſhould give the
ſame Account of the Life, Miracles, and
Doctrine of *Jeſus Chriſt*, as might be-
come a Chriſtian to have given: Nor on
the other hand was it at all improbable,
that a Man of Senſe ſhould beware to
leſſen or traduce what, for ought he knew,
might have been a heavenly Diſpenſation:
between which two Courſes the middle
was to ſay nothing, but paſs it over in a

† Acts v.

DIAL. VI. doubtful or a reſpectful Silence. And it is obſervable, that where this Hiſtorian occaſionally mentions *Jeſus Chriſt* in his Account of St. *James*'s Death, he doth it without any Reflection, or ſaying either Good or Bad, though at the ſame time he ſhews a Regard for the Apoſtle. It is obſervable, I ſay, that ſpeaking of *Jeſus* his Expreſſion is, who was called the Chriſt, not who pretended to be the Chriſt, or who was falſly called the Chriſt, but ſimply τῦ λεγομένυ Χριστῦ*. It is evident *Joſephus* knew there was ſuch a Man as *Jeſus*, and that he was ſaid to be the Chriſt, and yet he condemns neither him nor his Followers; which to me ſeems an Argument in their favour. Certainly if we ſuppoſe *Joſephus* to have known or been perſuaded that he was an Impoſtor, it will be difficult to account for his not ſaying ſo in plain terms. But if we ſuppoſe him in *Gamaliel*'s way of thinking, who ſuſpended his Judgment, and was afraid of being found to fight againſt God, it ſhould ſeem natural for him to behave in that very manner, which according to you makes againſt our Faith, but I verily think makes for it. But what if *Joſephus* had been a Bigot, or even a *Sadducee*, an Infidel, an Atheiſt? What then! we readily grant there might have

* Joſ. Ant. l. 20. c. 8.

been

been Persons of Rank, Politicians, Gene- DIAL.
rals, and Men of Letters, then as well as VI.
now, *Jews* as well as *Englishmen*, who be-
lieved no Revealed Religion: And that some such Persons might possibly have heard of a Man in low Life, who performed Miracles by Magic, without informing themselves, or perhaps ever inquiring, about his Mission and Doctrine. Upon the whole, I cannot comprehend why any Man should conclude against the Truth of the Gospel, from *Josephus*'s omitting to speak of it, any more than from his omitting to embrace it. Had the first Christians been Chief Priests and Rulers, or Men of Science and Learning, like *Philo* and *Josephus*, it might perhaps with better Colour have been objected, that their Religion was of Humane Contrivance, than now that it hath pleased God by weak things to confound the Strong. This I think sufficiently accounts, why in the beginning the Gospel might overlook or be overlooked by Men of a certain Rank and Character.

XXVII. *ALC.* And yet it seems an odd Argument in proof of any Doctrine, that it was preached by simple People to simple People. *CRI.* Indeed if there was no other Attestation to the Truth of the

DIAL. VI. Chriſtian Religion, this muſt be owned a very weak one. But if a Doctrine begun by Inſtruments, mean, as to all Humane Advantages, and making its firſt Progreſs among thoſe, who had neither Wealth nor Art nor Power to grace or encourage it, ſhould in a ſhort time by its own innate Excellency, the mighty Force of Miracles, and the Demonſtration of the Spirit, not only without, but againſt, all worldly Motives ſpread through the World, and ſubdue Men of all Ranks and Conditions of Life, would it not be very unreaſonable to reject or ſuſpect it, for the want of Humane Means? And might not this with much better reaſon be thought an Argument of its coming from God? *ALC.* But ſtill an inquiſitive Man will want the Teſtimony of Men of Learning and Knowledge. *CRI.* But from the firſt Century onwards, there was never wanting the Teſtimony of ſuch Men who wrote learnedly in defence of the Chriſtian Religion, who lived, many of them, when the Memory of things was freſh, who had Abilities to judge and Means to know, and who gave the cleareſt Proofs of their Conviction and Sincerity. *ALC.* But all the while theſe Men were Chriſtians, prejudiced Chriſtians, and therefore their Teſtimony is to be ſuſpected. *CRI.* It ſeems then you would have

have *Jews* or Heathens atteſt to the Truths of Chriſtianity. *ALC.* That is the very Thing I want. *CRI.* But how can this be? or if it could, would not any rational Man be apt to ſuſpect ſuch Evidence, and ask, how it was poſſible for a Man really to believe ſuch things himſelf, and not become a Chriſtian? The Apoſtles and firſt Converts were themſelves *Jews*, and brought up in a Veneration for the Law of *Moſes*, and in all the Prejudices of that People: many Fathers, Chriſtian Philoſophers, and learned Apologiſts for the Faith, who had been bred *Gentiles*, were without doubt imbued with Prejudices of Education: and if the Finger of God and Force of Truth converted both the one and the other from *Judaiſm* or *Gentiliſm*, in ſpite of their Prejudices to Chriſtianity, is not their Teſtimony ſo much the ſtronger? You have then the Suffrages of both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, atteſting to the Truth of our Religion, in the earlieſt Ages. But to expect or deſire the Atteſtation of *Jews* remaining *Jews*, or of *Gentiles* remaining *Gentiles*, ſeems unreaſonable: nor can it be imagined that the Teſtimony of Men, who were not converted themſelves, ſhould be the likelieſt to convert others. We have indeed the Teſtimony of Heathen Writers to prove, That about the time of our

DIAL. VI.

DIAL. VI. our Saviour's Birth, there was a general Expectation in the Eaſt of a *Meſſiah* or Prince, who ſhould found a new Dominion: That there were ſuch People as Chriſtians: That they were cruelly perſecuted and put to Death: That they were innocent and holy in Life and Worſhip: And that there did really exiſt in that time, certain Perſons and Facts mentioned in the New Teſtament: and for other Points, we have learned Fathers, ſeveral of whom had been, as I already obſerved, bred Heathens, to atteſt their Truth. *ALC.* For my part, I have no great Opinion of the Capacity or Learning of the Fathers, and many learned Men, eſpecially of the Reformed Churches abroad, are of the ſame mind, which ſaves me the trouble of looking my ſelf into their voluminous Writings. *CRI.* I ſhall not take upon me to ſay, with the Minute Philoſopher *Pomponatius**, that *Origen*, *Baſil*, *Auguſtine*, and divers other Fathers, were equal to *Plato*, *Ariſtotle*, and the greateſt of the *Gentiles* in Humane Knowledge. But, if I may be allowed to make a Judgment from what I have ſeen of their Writings, I ſhould think ſeveral of them Men of great Parts, Eloquence, and Learning, and much ſuperior to thoſe who ſeem to undervalue them. Without any Affront to

* Lib. de immortalitate animæ.

certain

certain modern Critics or Tranſlators, *Eraſmus* may be allowed a Man of fine Taſte, and a fit Judge of Senſe and good Writing, though his Judgment in this Point was very different from theirs. Some of our Reformed Brethren, becauſe the *Romaniſts* attribute too much, ſeem to have attributed too little to them, from a very uſual, though no very judicious Oppoſition: which is apt to lead Men to remark Defects, without making proper Allowances, and to ſay things which neither Piety, Candour, nor good Senſe require them to ſay. DIAL. VI.

XXVIII. *ALC.* But though I ſhould acknowledge, that a concurring Teſtimony of many learned and able Men throughout the firſt Ages of Chriſtianity may have its Weight, yet when I conſider the great number of Forgeries and Hæreſies that ſprung up in thoſe Times, it very much weakens their Credit. *CRI.* Pray, *Alciphron*, would it be allowed a good Argument in the Mouth of a Papiſt againſt the Reformation, that many abſurd Sects ſprung up at the ſame time with it? Are we to wonder, that, when good Seed is ſowing, the Enemy ſhould ſow Tares? But at once to cut off ſeveral Objections, let us ſuppoſe in fact, what you do not deny poſſible, that there is a God, a Devil, and a Revelation from

DIAL. VI. from Heaven committed to Writing many Centuries ago. Do but take a view of Humane Nature, and conſider, what would probably follow upon ſuch a Suppoſition: and whether it is not very likely, there ſhould be Half-believers, miſtaken Bigots, holy Frauds, ambitious, intereſted, diſputing, conceited, ſchiſmatical, hæretical, abſurd Men among the Profeſſors of ſuch Revealed Religion, as well as after a courſe of Ages, various Readings, Omiſſions, Tranſpoſitions, and Obſcurities in the Text of the ſacred Oracles? And if ſo, I leave you to judge, whether it be reaſonable to make thoſe Events an Objection againſt the Being of a Thing, which would probably and naturally follow upon the Suppoſal of its Being. *ALC.* After all, ſay what you will, this Variety of Opinions muſt needs ſhake the Faith of a reaſonable Man. Where there are ſo many different Opinions on the ſame Point, it is very certain they cannot all be true, but it is certain they may all be falſe. And the Means to find out the Truth! When a Man of Senſe ſets about this Inquiry, he finds himſelf on a ſudden ſtartled and amuſed with hard Words and knotty Queſtions. This makes him abandon the Purſuit, thinking the Game not worth the Chace. *CRI.* But would not this Man of Senſe do well to conſider, it muſt

must argue want of Discernment, to reject divine Truths for the sake of Humane Follies? Use but the same Candour and Impartiality in treating of Religion, that you would think proper on other Subjects. We desire no more, and expect no less. In Law, in Physic, in Politics, wherever Men have refined, is it not evident they have been always apt to run into Disputes and Chicane? But will that hinder you from admitting there are many good Rules and just Notions, and useful Truths in all those Professions. Physicians may dispute, perhaps vainly and unintelligibly, about the Animal System: They may assign different Causes of Distempers, some explaining them by the elementary Qualities, hot and cold, moist and dry, others by chymical, others by mechanical Principles: Yet this doth not hinder but the Bark may be good for an Ague, and Rhubarb for a Flux. Nor can it be inferred from the different Sects, which from time to time have sprung up in that Profession, the Dogmatic, for instance, Empiric, Methodic, Galenic, Paracelsian, or the hard Words and knotty Questions and idle Theories which have grown from them, or been engrafted on them, that therefore we should deny the Circulation of the Blood, or reject their excellent Rules about Exercise, Air, and Diet.

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ALC.

DIAL. VI. *ALC.* It ſeems you would ſcreen Religion by the Example of other Profeſſions, all which have produced Sects and Diſputes as well as Chriſtianity, which may in it ſelf be true and uſeful, notwithſtanding many falſe and fruitleſs Notions engrafted on it by the Wit of Man. Certainly if this had been obſerved or believed by many acute Reaſoners, they would never have made the Multiplicity of Religious Opinions and Controverſies, an Argument againſt Religion in general. *CRI.* How ſuch an obvious Truth ſhould eſcape Men of Senſe and Inquiry I leave you to account: But I can very eaſily account for groſs Miſtakes in thoſe, who paſs for Free-thinkers, without ever thinking: or, if they do think, whoſe Meditations are employ'd on other Points of a very different Nature, from a ſerious and impartial Inquiry about Religion.

XXIX. But to return: What or where is the Profeſſion of Men, who never ſplit into Schiſms, or never talk Nonſenſe? Is it not evident, that out of all the kinds of Knowledge, on which the Humane Mind is employ'd, there grow certain Excreſcences, which may be pared off like the Clippings of Hair or Nails in the Body, and with no worſe Conſequence. Whatever Bigots or Enthuſiaſts, whatever notional

nal or ſcholaſtic Divines may ſay or think, it is certain the Faith derived from Chriſt and his Apoſtles, was not a piece of empty Sophiſtry: They did not deliver and tranſmit down to us κενὴν ἀπάτην but γυμνὴν γνώμην, to uſe the Expreſſion of a holy Confeſſor *. And to pretend to demoliſh their Foundation for the ſake of Humane Superſtructure, be it Hay or Stubble or what it will, is no Argument of juſt Thought or Reaſon; any more than it is of Fairneſs, to ſuppoſe a doubtful Senſe fixed, and argue from one ſide of the Queſtion in diſputed Points. Whether, for inſtance, the beginning of *Geneſis* is to be underſtood in a literal or allegorical Senſe? Whether the Book of *Job* be an Hiſtory or a Parable? Being Points diſputed between Chriſtians, an Infidel can have no right to argue from one ſide of the Queſtion in thoſe or the like Caſes. This or that Tenet of a Sect, this or that controverted Notion is not what we contend for at preſent, but the general Faith taught by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and preſerved by univerſal and perpetual Tradition in all the Churches down to our own Times. To tax or ſtrike at this Divine Doctrine, on account of things foreign and adventitious, the Speculations and Diſputes of curious

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* Socr. Hiſtor. Eccleſ. l. 1.

Men,

DIAL. VI. Men, is in my Mind an Abſurdity of the ſame kind, as it wou'd be to cut down a fine Tree yielding Fruit and Shade, becauſe its Leaves afforded Nouriſhment to Caterpillers, or becauſe Spiders may now and then weave Cobwebs among the Branches. *ALC.* To divide and diſtinguiſh would take time. We have ſeveral Gentlemen very capable of judging in the groſs, but that want Attention for irkſome and dry Studies or minute Inquiries. To which as it would be very hard to oblige Men againſt their Will, ſo it muſt be a great Wrong to the World, as well as themſelves, to debar them from the Right of deciding according to their natural Senſe of things. *CRI.* It were to be wiſhed thoſe capable Men would employ their Judgment and Attention on the ſame Objects. If theological Inquiries are unpalatable, the Field of Nature is wide. How many Diſcoveries to be made! How many Errors to be corrected in Arts and Sciences! How many Vices to be reformed in Life and Manners! Why do Men ſingle out ſuch Points as are innocent and uſeful, when there are ſo many pernicious Miſtakes to be amended? Why ſet themſelves to deſtroy the Hopes of Humane Kind and Encouragements to Virtue? Why delight to judge where they diſdain to inquire? Why not

not employ their noble Talents on the Longitude or perpetual Motion? *ALC.* I wonder you ſhould not ſee the Difference between Points of Curioſity and Religion. Thoſe employ only Men of a Genius or Humour ſuited to them: But all Mankind have a right to cenſure, and are concerned to judge of theſe, except they will blindly ſubmit to be governed, by the ſtale Wiſdom of their Anceſtors and the eſtabliſhed Laws of their Country. *CRI.* It ſhould ſeem, if they are concerned to judge, they are not leſs concerned to examine before they judge. *ALC.* But after all the Examination and Inquiry that mortal Man can make about Revealed Religion, it is impoſſible to come at any rational ſure footing. DIAL. VI.

XXX. There is, indeed, a deal of ſpecious Talk about Faith founded upon Miracles: But when I examine this Matter thoroughly, and trace Chriſtian Faith up to its Original, I find it reſts upon much Darkneſs and Scruple and Uncertainty. Inſtead of Points evident or agreeable to Humane Reaſon, I find a wonderful Narrative of the Son of God tempted in the Wilderneſs by the Devil, a thing utterly unaccountable, without any End, or Uſe, or Reaſon whatſoever. I meet with ſtrange

DIAL. VI. Hiſtories of Apparitions of Angels and Voices from Heaven, with ſurpriſing accounts of Dæmoniacs, things quite out of the Road of common Senſe or Obſervation, with ſeveral incredible Feats ſaid to have been done by Divine Power, but more probably the Inventions of Men: nor the leſs likely to be ſo, becauſe I cannot pretend to ſay with what View they were invented. Deſigns deeply laid are dark, and the leſs we know the more we ſuſpect: But, admitting them for true, I ſhall not allow them to be miraculous, until I thoroughly know the Power of what are called ſecond Cauſes and the Force of Magic.

CRI. You ſeem, *Alciphron*, to analyſe not Faith, but Infidelity, and trace it to its Principles; which, from your own Account, I collect to be dark and doubtful Scruples and Surmiſes, Haſtineſs in judging, and Narrowneſs in thinking, grounded on a fanciful Notion which over-rates the little Scantling of your own Experience, and on real Ignorance of the Views of Providence, and of the Qualities, Operations, and mutual Reſpects of the ſeveral kinds of Beings, which are, or may be, for ought you know, in the Univerſe. Thus obſcure, uncertain, conceited, and conjectural are the Principles of Infidelity. Whereas on the other hand, the Principles of

of Faith seem to me Points plain and clear. It is a clear Point, that this Faith in Christ was spread abroad throughout the World soon after his Death. It is a clear Point, that this was not effected by humane Learning, Politics, or Power. It is a clear Point, that in the early Times of the Church there were several Men of Knowledge and Integrity, who embraced this Faith not from any, but against all, temporal Motives. It is a clear Point, that, the nearer they were to the Fountain-head, the more Opportunity they had to satisfy themselves, as to the Truth of those Facts which they believed. It is a clear Point, that the less Interest there was to persuade, the more need there was of Evidence to convince them. It is a clear Point, that they relied on the Authority of those who declared themselves Eye-witnesses of the Miracles and Resurrection of Christ. It is a clear Point, that those professed Eye-witnesses suffer'd much for this their Attestation, and finally sealed it with their Blood. It is a clear Point, that these Witnesses, weak and contemptible as they were, overcame the World, spread more Light, preached purer Morals, and did more Benefit to Mankind, than all the Philosophers and Sages put together. These Points appear to me clear and sure, and,

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DIAL. VI. being allow'd ſuch, they are plain, juſt, and reaſonable Motives of Aſſent: They ſtand upon no fallacious Ground, they contain nothing beyond our Sphere, neither ſuppoſing more Knowledge nor other Faculties than we are really Maſters of: and if they ſhould not be admitted for morally certain, as I believe they will by fair and unprejudiced Inquirers, yet the allowing them to be only probable is ſufficient to ſtop the Mouth of an Infidel. Theſe plain Points, I ſay, are the Pillars of our Faith, and not thoſe obſcure ones by you ſuppoſed; which are in truth the unſound, uncertain Principles of Infidelity, to a raſh, prejudiced, and aſſuming Spirit. To raiſe an Argument, or anſwer an Objection, from hidden Powers of Nature or Magic is groping in the dark: But by the evident Light of Senſe, Men might be ſufficiently certified of ſenſible Effects, and Matters of Fact, ſuch as the Miracles and Reſurrection of Chriſt; and the Teſtimony of ſuch Men might be tranſmitted to After-ages, with the ſame moral Certainty as other hiſtorical Narrations: and thoſe ſame miraculous Facts, compared by Reaſon with the Doctrines they were brought to prove, may afford to an unbiaſſed Mind ſtrong Indications of their coming from God, or a ſuperior Principle, whoſe Goodneſs retrieved

trieved the Moral World, whoſe Power commanded the natural, and whoſe Providence extended over both. Give me leave to ſay, that nothing dark, nothing incomprehenſible, or myſterious, or unaccountable, is the Ground or Motive, the Principle or Foundation, the Proof or Reaſon of our Faith, although it may be the Object of it. For it muſt be owned, that, if by clear and ſure Principles we are rationally led to believe a Point leſs clear; we do not therefore reject ſuch Point, becauſe it is myſterious to conceive, or difficult to account for; nor would it be right ſo to do. As for *Jews* and *Gentiles*, anciently attributing our Saviour's Miracles to Magic, this is ſo far from being a Proof againſt them, that to me it ſeems rather a Proof of the Facts, without diſproving the Cauſe to which we aſcribe them. As we do not pretend to know the Nature and Operations of Dæmons, the Hiſtory, Laws, and Syſtem of rational Beings, and the Schemes or Views of Providence, ſo far as to account for every Action and Appearance recorded in the Goſpel: ſo neither do you know enough of thoſe Things, to be able from that Knowledge of yours to object againſt Accounts ſo well atteſted. It is an eaſy Matter to raiſe Scruples upon

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DIAL. VI. many authentic Parts of Civil Hiſtory, which, requiring a more perfect Knowledge of Facts, Circumſtances, and Councils, than we can come at to explain them, muſt be to us inexplicable. And this is ſtill more eaſy with reſpect to the Hiſtory of Nature; in which, if Surmiſes were admitted for Proofs againſt Things odd, ſtrange, and unaccountable; if our ſcanty Experience were made the Rule and Meaſure of Truth, and all thoſe Phænomena rejected, that we, through Ignorance of the Principles, and Laws, and Syſtem of Nature, could not explain; we ſhould indeed make Diſcoveries, but it would be only of our own Blindneſs and Preſumption. And why Men that are ſo eaſily and ſo often gravelled in common Points, in Things natural and viſible, ſhould yet be ſo ſharp-ſighted and dogmatical about the inviſible World, and its Myſteries, is to me a Point utterly unaccountable by all the Rules of Logic and good Senſe. Upon the whole, therefore, I cannot help thinking there are Points ſufficiently plain, and clear, and full, whereon a Man may ground a reaſonable Faith in Chriſt: but that the Attacks of Minute Philoſophers againſt this Faith are grounded upon Darkneſs, Ignorance, and Preſumption. *ALC.*

I doubt I ſhall ſtill remain in the dark as to the Proofs of the Chriſtian Religion, and always preſume there is nothing in them. DIAL. VI.

XXXI. For how is it poſſible, at this remote Diſtance, to arrive at any Knowledge, or frame any Demonſtration about it? *CRI.* What then? Knowledge, I grant, in a ſtrict Senſe cannot be had without Evidence or Demonſtration: but probable Arguments are a ſufficient Ground of Faith. Who ever ſuppoſed that ſcientifical Proofs were neceſſary to make a Chriſtian? Faith alone is required: and provided that, in the main and upon the whole, Men are perſuaded, this ſaving Faith may conſiſt with ſome Degrees of Obſcurity, Scruple, and Error. For although the Light of Truth be unchangeable, and the ſame in its eternal Source, the Father of Lights: Yet, with reſpect to us, it is variouſly weakened and obſcured, by paſſing through a long Diſtance or groſs Medium, where it is intercepted, diſtorted, or tinctured by the Prejudices and Paſſions of Men. But all this notwithſtanding, he that will uſe his Eyes may ſee enough for the Purpoſes either of Nature, or of Grace; though by a Light, dimmer indeed, or clearer,

DIAL. VI. according to the Place, or the Diſtance, or the Hour, or the Medium. And it will be ſufficient, if ſuch Analogy appears between the Diſpenſations of Grace and Nature, as may make it probable (although much ſhould be unaccountable in both) to ſuppoſe them derived from the ſame Author, and the Workmanſhip of one and the ſame Hand. *ALC.* Thoſe who ſaw and touched and handled *Jeſus Chriſt* after his Reſurrection, if there were any ſuch, may be ſaid to have ſeen by a clear Light: But to us the Light is very dim, and yet it is expected we ſhould believe this Point as well as they. For my part, I believe, with *Spinoſa*, that Chriſt's Death was Literal, but his Reſurrection Allegorical *. *CRI.* And for my part, I can ſee nothing in this celebrated Infidel, that ſhould make me deſert Matters of Fact, and moral Evidence, to adopt his Notions. Though I muſt needs own I admit an allegorical Reſurrection that proves the real: to wit, a Reſurrection of Chriſt's Diſciples from Weakneſs to Reſolution, from Fear to Courage, from Deſpair to Hope: of which, for ought I can ſee, no rational Account can be given, but the ſenſible Evidence that our Lord was truly, really, and literally

* V. Spinoſæ Epiſt. ad Oldenburgium.

riſen

riſen from the dead: But as it cannot be denied that his Diſciples, who were Eye-Witneſſes of his Miracles and Reſurrection, had ſtronger Evidence than we can have of thoſe Points: So it cannot be denied, that ſuch Evidence was then more neceſſary, to induce Men to embrace a new Inſtitution, contrary to the whole Syſtem of their Education, their Prejudices, their Paſſions, their Intereſts, and every Humane Motive. Though to me it ſeems, the moral Evidence and probable Arguments within our Reach, are abundantly ſufficient to make prudent thinking Men adhere to the Faith, handed down to us from our Anceſtors, eſtabliſhed by the Laws of our Country, requiring Submiſſion in Points above our Knowledge, and for the reſt recommending Doctrines the moſt agreeable to our Intereſt and our Reaſon. And, however ſtrong the Light might have been at the Fountain-Head, yet its long Continuance and Propagation, by ſuch unpromiſing Inſtruments throughout the World, have been very wonderful. We may now take a more comprehenſive View of the Connexion, Order, and Progreſs of the divine Diſpenſations, and by a Retroſpect on a long Series of paſt Ages, perceive a Unity of Deſign running throughout the Whole, a grad-

DIAL. VI. a gradual disclosing and fulfilling the Purposes of Providence, a regular Progress from Types to Antitypes, from Things Carnal, to Things Spiritual, from Earth to Heaven. We may behold Christ crucified, that Stumbling-block to the *Jews*, and Foolishness to the *Greeks*, putting a final Period to the Temple Worship of the one, and the Idolatry of the other, and that Stone, which was cut out of the Mountain without Hands, and brake in Pieces all other Kingdoms, become it self a great Mountain.

XXXII. If a due Reflexion on these Things be not sufficient to beget a Reverence for the Christian Faith in the Minds of Men, I should rather impute it to any other Cause, than a wise and cautious Incredulity: When I see their Easiness of Faith in the common Concerns of Life, where there is no Prejudice or Appetite to bias or disturb their natural Judgment: When I see those very Men that in Religion will not stir a Step without Evidence, and at every Turn expect Demonstration, trust their Health to a Physician, and their Lives to a Sailor with an implicit Faith, I cannot think they deserve the Honour of being thought more incredulous than other Men: or that they are more

more accuſtomed to know, and for this Reaſon leſs inclined to believe. On the contrary, one is tempted to ſuſpect, that Ignorance hath a greater Share than Science in our modern Infidelity: and that it proceeds more from a wrong Head, or an irregular Will, than from deep Reſearches. *LYS.* We do not, it muſt be owned, think that Learning or deep Reſearches are neceſſary to paſs a right Judgment upon Things. I ſometimes ſuſpect that Learning is apt to produce and juſtify Whims, and ſincerely believe we ſhould do better without it. Our Sect are divided on this Point, but much the greater Part think with me. I have heard more than once very obſerving Men remark, that Learning was the true Humane Means which preſerved Religion in the World: and that, if we had it in our Power to prefer Blockheads in the Church, all would ſoon be right. *CRI.* Men muſt be ſtrangely in Love with their Opinions, to put out their Eyes rather than part with them. But it has been often remarked, by obſerving Men that there are no greater Bigots than Infidels. *LYS.* What! a Free-thinker and a Bigot, impoſſible! *CRI.* Not ſo impoſſible neither, that an Infidel ſhould be bigoted to his Infidelity. Methinks I ſee a Bigot, where-

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DIAL. VI. ever I see a Man over-bearing and positive without knowing why, laying the greatest Stress on Points of smallest Moment, hasty to judge of the Conscience, Thoughts, and inward Views of other Men, impatient of reasoning against his own Opinions, and choosing them with Inclination rather than Judgment, an Enemy to Learning, and attached to mean Authorities. How far our modern Infidels agree with this Description, I leave to be considered by those who really consider and think for themselves. *LYS.* We are no Bigots, we are Men that discover Difficulties in Religion, that tie Knots and raise Scruples, which disturb the Repose and interrupt the golden Dreams of Bigots, who therefore cannot endure us. *CRI.* They who cast about for Difficulties, will be sure to find or make them upon every Subject: But he that would, upon the Foot of Reason, erect himself into a Judge, in order to make a wise Judgment on a Subject of that Nature, will not only consider the doubtful and difficult Parts of it, but take a comprehensive View of the whole, consider it in all its Parts and Relations, trace it to its Original, examine its Principles, Effects, and Tendencies, its Proofs internal and external: he will distinguish between

between the clear Points and the obſcure, the certain and the uncertain, the eſſential and the circumſtantial, between what is genuine and what foreign. He will conſider the different Sorts of Proof, that belong to different Things: where Evidence is to be expected: where Probability may ſuffice: and where it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe there ſhould be Doubts and Scruples. He will proportion his Pains and Exactneſs to the Importance of the Inquiry, and check that Diſpoſition of his Mind to conclude all thoſe Notions, groundleſs Prejudices, with which it was imbued before it knew the Reaſon of them. He will ſilence his Paſſions, and liſten to Truth. He will endeavour to untie Knots as well as to tie them, and dwell rather on the light Parts of Things than the obſcure. He will balance the Force of his Underſtanding with the Difficulty of the Subject, and to render his Judgment impartial, hear Evidence on all Sides, and ſo far as he is led by Authority, chooſe to follow that of the honeſteſt and wiſeſt Men. Now it is my ſincere Opinion, the Chriſtian Religion may well ſtand the Teſt of ſuch an Inquiry. *LYS.* But ſuch an Inquiry would coſt too much Pains and Time. We have thought of another Method, the bringing Religion to the Teſt of

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DIAL. VI. Wit and Humour: This we find a much ſhorter, eaſier, and more effectual Way. And, as all Enemies are at Liberty to chooſe their Weapons, we make choice of thoſe we are moſt expert at: And we are the better pleaſed with this Choice, having obſerved that of all Things a ſolid Divine hates a Jeſt. *EUPH.* To conſider the whole of the Subject, to read and think on all Sides, to object plainly, and anſwer directly, upon the Foot of dry Reaſon and Argument, would be a very tedious and troubleſome Affair. Beſides it is attacking Pedants at their own Weapons. How much more delicate and artful is it, to give a Hint, to cover one's ſelf with an Ænigma, to drop a *double Entendre*, to keep it in one's Power to recover, and ſlip aſide, and leave his Antagoniſt beating the Air? *LYS.* This hath been practiſed with great Succeſs, and I believe it the Top Method to gain Proſelytes, and confound Pedants. *CRI.* I have ſeen ſeveral Things written in this Way, which, I ſuppoſe, were copied from the Behaviour of a ſly Sort of Scorners one may ſometimes meet with. Suppoſe a conceited Man that would paſs for witty, tipping the Wink upon one, thruſting out his Tongue at another; one while waggiſhly ſmiling, another with a grave Mouth

Mouth and ludicrous Eyes; often affecting the Countenance of one who ſmothered a Jeſt, and ſometimes burſting out in a Horſe-laugh: What a Figure would this be, I will not ſay in the Senate or Council, but in a private Viſit among well-bred Men? And yet this is the Figure that certain great Authors, who in this Age would paſs for Models, and do paſs for Models, make in their polite and elaborate Writings on the moſt weighty Points. *ALC.* I who profeſs my ſelf an Admirer, an Adorer of Reaſon, am obliged to own, that in ſome Caſes the Sharpneſs of Ridicule can do no more than the Strength of Argument. But if we exert our ſelves in the Uſe of Mirth and Humour, it is not for want of other Weapons. It ſhall never be ſaid that a Free-thinker was afraid of Reaſoning. No, *Crito*, we have Reaſons in ſtore, the beſt are yet to come: and if we can find an Hour for another Conference before we ſet out to morrow Morning, I'll undertake you ſhall be plied with Reaſons, as clear, and home, and cloſe to the Point as you could wiſh. DIAL. VI.

THE

DIAL. VII.

THE SEVENTH DIALOGUE.

I. *Christian Faith impossible.* II. *Words stand for Ideas.* III. *No Knowledge or Faith without Ideas.* IV. *Grace, no Idea of it.* V. *Abstract Ideas what and how made.* VI. *Abstract general Ideas impossible.* VII. *In what Sense there may be general Ideas.* VIII. *Suggesting Ideas not the only Use of Words.* IX. *Force as difficult to form an Idea of as Grace.* X. *Notwithstanding which, useful Propositions may be formed concerning it.* XI. *Belief of the Trinity and other Mysteries not absurd.* XII. *Mistakes about Faith an Occasion of profane Raillery.* XIII. *Faith, its true Nature and Effects.* XIV. *Illustrated by Science.* XV. *By Arithmetic in particular.* XVI. *Sciences conversant about Signs.* XVII. *The true End of Speech, Reason, Science, and Faith.* XVIII. *Metaphysical Objections as strong against Humane Sciences as Articles of Faith.* XIX. *No Religion, because no Humane Liberty.* XX. *Farther Proof against Humane Liberty.* XXI. *Fatalism a Consequence of erroneous Suppositions.*

fitions. XXII. *Man an accountable A-* DIAL.
gent. XXIII. *Inconſiſtency, Singularity,* VII.
and Credulity of Minute Philoſophers.
XXIV. *Untrodden Paths and new Light of the Minute Philoſophers.* XXV. *Sophiſtry of the Minute Philoſophers.* XXVI. *Minute Philoſophers ambiguous, ænigmatical, unfathomable.* XXVII. *Scepticiſm of the Minute Philoſophers.* XXVIII. *How a Sceptic ought to behave.* XXIX. *Minute Philoſophers, why difficult to convince.* XXX. *Thinking, not the epidemical Evil of theſe Times.* XXXI. *Infidelity, not an Effect of Reaſon or Thought, its true Motives aſſigned.* XXXII. *Variety of Opinions about Religion, Effects thereof.* XXXIII. *Method for proceeding with Minute Philoſophers.* XXXIV. *Want of Thought and want of Education Defects of the preſent Age.*

I. THE Philoſophers having reſolved to ſet out for *London* next Morning, we aſſembled at break of Day in the Library. *Alciphron* began with a Declaration of his Sincerity, aſſuring us he had very maturely and with a moſt unbiaſſed Mind conſidered all that had been ſaid the Day before. He added that, upon the whole, he could not deny ſeveral probable Reaſons

DIAL. VII. were produced for embracing the Chriſtian Faith. But, ſaid he, thoſe Reaſons being only probable can never prevail againſt abſolute Certainty and Demonſtration. If therefore I can demonſtrate your Religion to be a thing altogether abſurd and inconſiſtent, your probable Arguments in its Defence do from that Moment loſe their Force, and with it all Right to be anſwered or conſidered. The concurring Teſtimony of ſincere and able Witneſſes hath without queſtion great Weight in Humane Affairs. I will even grant that things odd and unaccountable to Humane Judgment or Experience, may ſometimes claim our Aſſent on that ſole Motive. And I will alſo grant it poſſible, for a Tradition to be convey'd with moral Evidence through many Centuries. But at the ſame time you will grant to me, that a thing demonſtrably and palpably falſe is not to be admitted on any Teſtimony whatever, which at beſt can never amount to Demonſtration. To be plain, no Teſtimony can make Nonſenſe Senſe: no moral Evidence can make Contradictions conſiſtent. Know then, that as the Strength of our Cauſe doth not depend upon, ſo neither is it to be decided by any critical Points of Hiſtory, Chronology, or Languages. You are not to wonder, if the ſame ſort of Tradition

tion and moral Proof, which governs our Assent with respect to Facts in civil or natural History is not admitted as a sufficient Voucher for metaphysical Absurdities and absolute Impossibilities. Things obscure and unaccountable in Humane Affairs, or the Operations of Nature, may yet be possible, and, if well attested, may be assented unto: but religious Assent or Faith can be evidently shewn in its own nature to be impracticable, impossible, and absurd. This is the primary Motive to Infidelity. This is our Citadel and Fortress, which may, indeed, be graced with Outwarks of various Erudition, but, if those are demolish'd, remains in it self and of its own proper Strength impregnable. *EUPH.* This, it must be owned, reduceth our Inquiry within a narrow Compass: do but make out this, and I shall have nothing more to say. *ALC.* Know then, that the shallow Mind of the Vulgar, as it dwells only on the outward Surface of things, and considers them in the gross, may be easily imposed on. Hence a blind Reverence for religious Faith and Mystery. But when an acute Philosopher comes to dissect and analyse these Points, the Imposture plainly appears: and as he has no Blindness, so he has no Reverence for empty Notions, or, to speak more

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DIAL. VII. properly, for meer Forms of Speech, which mean nothing, and are of no use to Mankind.

II. Words are Signs: they do or should stand for Ideas; which so far as they suggest they are significant. But Words that suggest no Ideas are insignificant. He who annexeth a clear Idea to every Word he makes use of speaks Sense: but where such Ideas are wanting, the Speaker utters Nonsense. In order therefore to know whether any Man's Speech be senseless and insignificant, we have nothing to do but lay aside the Words and consider the Ideas suggested by them. Men, not being able immediately to communicate their Ideas one to another, are obliged to make use of sensible Signs or Words; the use of which is to raise those Ideas in the Hearer, which are in the Mind of the Speaker: and if they fail of this End they serve to no Purpose. He who really thinks hath a Train of Ideas succeeding each other and connected in his Mind: and when he expresseth himself by Discourse, each Word suggests a distinct Idea to the Hearer or Reader; who by that means hath the same Train of Ideas in his, which was in the Mind of the Speaker or Writer. As far as this Effect is produced, so far the Discourse

courſe is intelligible, hath Senſe and Mean- DIAL.
ing. Hence it follows, that whoever can VII.
be ſuppoſed to underſtand what he reads
or hears, muſt have a Train of Ideas
raiſed in his Mind, correſpondent to the
Train of Words read or heard. Theſe
plain Truths, to which Men readily aſ-
ſent in Theory, are but little attended
to in Practice, and therefore deſerve to
be enlarged on and inculcated however
obvious and undeniable. Mankind are
generally averſe from Thinking though
apt enough to entertain Diſcourſe either
in themſelves or others: the Effect where-
of is, that their Minds are rather ſto-
red with Names than Ideas, the Husk
of Science rather than the Thing. And
yet theſe Words without Meaning do of-
ten make Diſtinctions of Parties, the Sub-
ject Matter of their Diſputes, and the
Object of their Zeal. This is the moſt
general Cauſe of Error, which doth not
influence ordinary Minds alone, but
even thoſe who paſs for acute and learn-
ed Philoſophers are often employ'd a-
bout Names inſtead of Things or Ideas,
and are ſuppoſed to know when they
only pronounce hard Words without a
Meaning.

DIAL. VII. III. Though it is evident that, as Knowledge is the Perception of the Connexion or Disagreement between Ideas, he who doth not distinctly perceive the Ideas marked by the Terms, so as to form a mental Proposition answering to the Verbal, cannot possibly have Knowledge: No more can he be said to have Opinion or Faith which imply a weaker Assent, but still it must be to a Proposition, the Terms of which are understood as clearly, although the Agreement or Disagreement of the Ideas may not be so evident, as in the Case of Knowledge. I say, all Degrees of Assent whether founded on Reason or Authority, more or less cogent, are internal Acts of the Mind which alike terminate in Ideas as their proper Object: without which there can be really no such thing as Knowledge, Faith, or Opinion. We may perhaps raise a Dust and Dispute about Tenets purely verbal: but what is this at bottom more than meer Trifling? All which will be easily admitted with respect to Humane Learning and Science; wherein it is an allowed Method to expose any Doctrine or Tenet by stripping them of the Words, and examining what Ideas are underneath, or whether any Ideas at all? This is often found the shortest way

to end Disputes, which might otherwise grow and multiply without end, the Litigants neither understanding one another nor themselves. It were needless to illustrate what shines by its own Light, and is admitted by all thinking Men. My Endeavour shall be only to apply it in the present Case. I suppose I need not be at any pains to prove, that the same Rules of Reason and good Sense which obtain in all other Subjects ought to take place in Religion. As for those who consider Faith and Reason as two distinct Provinces, and would have us think good Sense has nothing to do where it is most concerned, I am resolved never to argue with such Men, but leave them in quiet possession of their Prejudices. And now, for the particular Application of what I have said, I shall not single out any nice disputed Points of School Divinity, or those that relate to the Nature and Essence of God, which being allowed infinite you might pretend to screen them, under the general Notion of Difficulties attending the Nature of Infinity.

IV. Grace is the main Point in the Christian Dispensation, nothing is oftner mentioned or more considered throughout the New Testament; wherein it is repre-

DIAL. VII. sented as somewhat of a very particular Kind, distinct from any thing revealed to the *Jews*, or known by the Light of Nature. This same Grace is spoken of as the Gift of God, as coming by *Jesus Christ*, as reigning, as abounding, as operating. Men are said to speak through Grace, to believe through Grace. Mention is made of the Glory of Grace, the Riches of Grace, the Stewards of Grace. Christians are said to be Heirs of Grace, to receive Grace, grow in Grace, be strong in Grace, to stand in Grace, and to fall from Grace. And lastly, Grace is said to justify and to save them. Hence Christianity is styled the Covenant or Dispensation of Grace. And it is well known that no Point hath created more Controversy in the Church than this Doctrine of Grace. What Disputes about its Nature, Extent, and Effects, about universal, efficacious, sufficient, preventing, irresistible Grace, have employ'd the Pens of Protestant as well as Popish Divines, of *Jansenists* and *Molinists*, of *Lutherans*, *Calvinists*, and *Arminians*, as I have not the least Curiosity to know, so I need not say. It sufficeth to observe, that there have been and are still subsisting great Contests upon these Points. Only one thing I should desire to be informed of, to wit, What is the clear and

and distinct Idea marked by the Word Grace? I presume a Man may know the bare meaning of a Term, without going into the Depth of all those learned Inquiries. This surely is an easy Matter, provided there is an Idea annexed to such Term. And if there is not, it can be neither the Subject of a rational Dispute, nor the Object of real Faith. Men may indeed impose upon themselves or others, and pretend to argue and believe, when at bottom there is no Argument or Belief, farther than meer verbal Trifling. Grace taken in the vulgar Sense, either for Beauty, or Favour, I can easily understand. But when it denotes an active, vital, ruling Principle, influencing and operating on the Mind of Man, distinct from every natural Power or Motive, I profess my self altogether unable to understand it, or frame any distinct Idea of it: and therefore I cannot assent to any Proposition concerning it, nor consequently have any Faith about it: and it is a self-evident Truth, That God obligeth no Man to Impossibilities. At the Request of a Philosophical Friend, I did cast an Eye on the Writings he shew'd me of some Divines, and talked with others on this Subject, but after all I had read or heard could make nothing of it, having always found whenever

DIAL. VII. ever I laid aſide the Word *Grace*, and looked into my own Mind, a perfect Vacuity or Privation of all Ideas. And, as I am apt to think Mens Minds and Faculties are made much alike, I ſuſpect that other Men, if they examined what they call Grace with the ſame Exactneſs and Indifference, would agree with me that there was nothing in it but an empty Name. This is not the only Inſtance, where a Word often heard and pronounced is believed intelligible, for no other Reaſon but becauſe it is familiar. Of the ſame Kind are many other Points reputed neceſſary Articles of Faith. That which in the preſent Caſe impoſeth upon Mankind I take to be partly this. Men ſpeak of this holy Principle as of ſomething that acts, moves, and determines, taking their Ideas from corporeal things, from Motion and the Force or *Momentum* of Bodies, which being of an obvious and ſenſible Nature they ſubſtitute in place of a thing ſpiritual and incomprehenſible, which is a manifeſt Deluſion. For though the Idea of corporeal Force be ever ſo clear and intelligible, it will not therefore follow that the Idea of Grace, a thing perfectly incorporeal, muſt be ſo too. And though we may reaſon diſtinctly, perceive, aſſent, and form Opinions about the one, it will by

by no means follow that we can do ſo of the other. Thus it comes to paſs, that a clear ſenſible Idea of what is real produceth, or rather is made a Pretence for, an imaginary ſpiritual Faith that terminates in no Object; a thing impoſſible! For there can be no Aſſent where there are no Ideas: and where there is no Aſſent there can be no Faith: And what cannot be, that no Man is obliged to. This is as clear as any thing in *Euclid.*

V. The ſame Method of Reaſoning may be applied by any Man of Senſe to confute all other the moſt eſſential Articles of the Chriſtian Faith. You are not therefore to wonder that a Man who proceeds on ſuch ſolid Grounds, ſuch clear and evident Principles, ſhould be deaf to all you can ſay from moral Evidence, or probable Arguments, which are nothing in the Balance againſt Demonſtration. *EUPH.* The more Light and Force there is in this Diſcourſe, the more you are to blame for not having produced it ſooner. For my part I ſhould never have ſaid one Word againſt Evidence. But let me ſee whether I underſtand you rightly. You ſay, every Word in an intelligible Diſcourſe muſt ſtand for an Idea; which Ideas as far as they are clearly and diſtinctly apprehended,

DIAL. VII. ed, ſo far the Diſcourſe hath Meaning, without which it is uſeleſs and inſignificant. *ALC.* I do. *EUPH.* For Inſtance, when I hear the Words *Man*, *Triangle*, *Colour*, pronounced; they muſt excite in my Mind diſtinct Ideas of thoſe things whereof they are Signs, otherwiſe I cannot be ſaid to underſtand them. *ALC.* Right. *EUPH.* And this is the only true Uſe of Language. *ALC.* That is what I affirm. *EUPH.* But every time the Word *Man* occurs in Reading or Converſation, I am not conſcious that the particular diſtinct Idea of a Man is excited in my Mind. For Inſtance, when I read in St. *Paul*'s Epiſtle to the *Galatians* theſe Words: *If a man thinketh himſelf to be ſomething, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himſelf.* Methinks I comprehend the Force and Meaning of this Propoſition, although I do not frame to my ſelf the particular diſtinct Idea of a Man. *ALC.* It is very true, you do not form in your Mind the particular Idea of *Peter*, *James*, or *John*, of a fair or a black, a tall or a low, a fat or a lean, a ſtraight or a crooked, a wiſe or a fooliſh, a ſleeping or waking Man, but the abſtract general Idea of *Man*, preſcinding from, and excluſive of all particular Shape, Size, Complexion, Paſſions, Faculties, and every individual Cir-

Circumſtance. To explain this Matter more fully, you are to underſtand there is in the Humane Mind, a Faculty of contemplating the general Nature of things, ſeparate from all thoſe Particularities which diſtinguiſh the Individuals one from another. For Example, in *Peter*, *James*, and *John*, you may obſerve in each a certain Collection of Stature, Figure, Colour, and other peculiar Properties by which they are known aſunder, diſtinguiſhed from all other Men, and, if I may ſo ſay, individuated. Now leaving out of the Idea of a Man, that which is peculiar to the Individual, and retaining only that which is common to all Men, you form an abſtract univerſal Idea of *Man* or *Humane Nature*, which includes no particular Stature, Shape, Colour, or other Quality whether of Mind or Body. After the ſame manner you may obſerve particular Triangles to differ one from another, as their Sides are equal or unequal, and their Angles greater or leſſer: whence they are denominated æquilateral, æquicrural, or ſcalenum, obtuſangular, acutangular, or rectangular. But the Mind, excluding out of its Idea all theſe peculiar Properties and Diſtinctions, frameth the general abſtract Idea of a Triangle; which is neither æquilateral, æquicrural, nor ſca-

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DIAL. VII. lenum, neither obtuſangular, acutangular, nor rectangular, but all and none of theſe at once *. The ſame may be ſaid of the general abſtract Idea of Colour, which is ſomething diſtinct from and excluſive of Blue, Red, Green, Yellow, and every other particular Colour, including only that general Eſſence in which they all agree. And what has been ſaid of theſe three general Names. and the abſtract general Ideas they ſtand for may be applied to all others. For you muſt know, that, particular Things or Ideas being infinite, if each were marked or ſignified by a diſtinct proper Name, Words muſt have been innumerable, and Language an endleſs impoſſible thing. Hence it comes to paſs, that appellative or general Names ſtand, immediately and properly, not for particular but for abſtract general Ideas, which they never fail to excite in the Mind, as oft as they are uſed to any ſignificant Purpoſe. And without this, there could be no Communication or Enlargement of Knowledge, no ſuch thing as univerſal Science or Theorems of any kind. Now for underſtanding any Propoſition or Diſcourſe, it is ſufficient that diſtinct Ideas are thereby raiſed in your Mind, correſpondent to thoſe in the

* See *Locke* on Humane Underſtanding, b. 4. c. 7.

Speaker's,

Speaker's, whether the Ideas ſo raiſed are particular or only abſtract and general Ideas. Foraſmuch, nevertheleſs, as theſe are not ſo obvious and familiar to vulgar Minds, it happens that ſome Men may think they have no Idea at all, when they have not a particular Idea: but the Truth is, you had the abſtract general Idea of Man, in the Inſtance aſſigned, wherein you thought you had none. After the ſame manner, when it is ſaid, that the three Angles of a Triangle are equal to two right ones; or, that Colour is the Object of Sight; it is evident the Words do not ſtand for this or that Triangle or Colour, but for abſtract general Ideas, excluding every thing peculiar to the Individuals, and including only the univerſal Nature common to the whole kind of Triangles or of Colours. DIAL. VII.

VI. *EUPH.* Tell me, *Alciphron*, are thoſe abſtract general Ideas clear and diſtinct? *ALC.* They are above all others clear and diſtinct, being the only proper Object of Science, which is altogether converſant about Univerſals. *EUPH.* And do you not think it very poſſible for any Man to know, whether he has this or that clear and diſtinct Idea or no? *ALC.* Doubtleſs. To know this he needs only examine

DIAL. VII. examine his own Thoughts and look into his own Mind. *EUPH.* But upon looking into my own Mind, I do not find that I have or can have these general abstract Ideas of a Man or a Triangle abovementioned, or of Colour prescinded from all particular Colours*. Though I shut mine Eyes, and use mine utmost Efforts, and reflect on all that passeth in my own Mind I find it utterly impossible to form such Ideas. *ALC.* To reflect with due Attention and turn the Mind inward upon it self, is a difficult Task, and not every one's Talent. *EUPH.* Not to insist on what you allowed, that every one might easily know for himself whether he has this or that Idea or no: I am tempted to think no body else can form those Ideas any more than I can. Pray, *Alciphron*, which are those things you would call absolutely impossible? *ALC.* Such as include a Contradiction. *EUPH.* Can you frame an Idea of what includes a Contradiction? *ALC.* I cannot. *EUPH.* Consequently whatever is absolutely impossible you cannot form an Idea of. *ALC.* This I grant. *EUPH.* But can a Colour or Triangle, such as you describe their

* *See the Introduction to a Treatise concerning the Principles of Humane Knowledge, Printed in the Year* MDCCX. *where the Absurdity of abstract Ideas is fully considered.*

ab-

abſtract general Ideas, really exiſt? *ALC.* It is abſolutely impoſſible ſuch things ſhould exiſt in Nature. *EUPH.* Should it not follow then that they cannot exiſt in your Mind, or in other Words that you cannot conceive or frame an Idea of them? *ALC.* You ſeem, *Euphranor*, not to diſtinguiſh between pure Intellect and Imagination. Abſtract general Ideas I take to be the Object of pure Intellect, which may conceive them although they cannot perhaps be imagined. *EUPH.* I do not perceive that I can by any Faculty, whether of Intellect or Imagination, conceive or frame an Idea of that which is impoſſible and includes a Contradiction. And I am very much at a loſs to account for your admitting that in common Inſtances, which you would make an Argument againſt Divine Faith and Myſteries. DIAL. VII.

VII. *ALC.* There muſt be ſome Miſtake in this. How is it poſſible there ſhould be general Knowledge without general Propoſitions, or theſe without general Names, which cannot be without general Ideas by ſtanding for which they become general? *EUPH.* But may not Words become general, by being made to ſtand indiſcriminately for all particular

DIAL. VII. Ideas, which from a mutual Reſemblance belong to the ſame Kind, without the Intervention of any abſtract general Idea? *ALC.* Is there then no ſuch thing as a general Idea? *EUPH.* May we not admit general Ideas, though we ſhould not admit them to be made by Abſtraction, or though we ſhould not allow of general abſtract Ideas? To me it ſeems, a particular Idea may become general by being uſed to ſtand for or repreſent other Ideas; and that general Knowledge is converſant about Signs or general Ideas made ſuch by their Signification; and which are conſidered rather in their relative Capacity, and as ſubſtituted for others, than in their own Nature, or for their own ſake. A Black Line, for inſtance, an Inch long, though in it ſelf particular, may yet become Univerſal, being uſed as a Sign to ſtand for any Line whatſoever. *ALC.* It is your Opinion then, that Words become general by repreſenting an indefinite Number of particular Ideas. *EUPH.* It ſeems ſo to me. *ALC.* Whenever therefore I hear a general Name, it muſt be ſuppoſed to excite ſome one or other particular Idea of that Species in my Mind. *EUPH.* I cannot ſay ſo neither. Pray, *Alciphron*, doth it ſeem to you neceſſary, that as often as the Word Man occurs in Reading

or

or Diſcourſe, you muſt form in your Mind the Idea of a particular Man? *ALC.* I own it doth not: and not finding particular Ideas always ſuggeſted by the Words, I was led to think I had abſtract general Ideas ſuggeſted by them. And this is the Opinion of all Thinking Men who are agreed, the only Uſe of Words is to ſuggeſt Ideas. And indeed what other Uſe can we aſſign them? DIAL. VII.

VIII. *EUPH.* Be the Uſe of Words or Names what it will, I can never think it is to do things impoſſible. Let us then inquire what it is? and ſee if we can make Senſe of our daily Practice. Words, it is agreed, are Signs: it may not therefore be amiſs to examine the Uſe of other Signs, in order to know that of Words. Counters, for inſtance, at a Card-Table are uſed, not for their own ſake, but only as Signs ſubſtituted for Money, as Words are for Ideas. Say now, *Alciphron,* is it neceſſary every time theſe Counters are uſed throughout the whole Progreſs of a Game, to frame an Idea of the diſtinct Sum or Value that each repreſents? *ALC.* By no means: it is ſufficient the Players at firſt agree on their reſpective Values, and at laſt ſubſtitute thoſe Values in their ſtead. *EUPH.* And in

DIAL. VII. casting up a Sum, where the Figures stand for Pounds, Shillings, and Pence, do you think it necessary, throughout the whole Progress of the Operation, in each Step to form Ideas of Pounds, Shillings, and Pence? *ALC.* I do not, it will suffice if in the Conclusion those Figures direct our Actions with respect to Things. *EUPH.* From hence it seems to follow that Words may not be insignificant, although they should not, every time they are used, excite the Ideas they signify in our Minds, it being sufficient, that we have it in our Power to substitute Things or Ideas for their Signs when there is Occasion. It seems also to follow, that there may be another Use of Words, besides that of marking and suggesting distinct Ideas, to wit, the influencing our Conduct and Actions; which may be done either by forming Rules for us to act by, or by raising certain Passions, Dispositions, and Emotions in our Minds. A Discourse, therefore, that directs how to act or excites to the Doing or Forbearance of an Action may, it seems, be useful and significant, although the Words whereof it is composed should not bring each a distinct Idea into our Minds. *ALC.* It seems so. *EUPH.* Pray tell me, *Alciphron*, is not an Idea altogether inactive? *ALC.* It is.

EUPH.

EUPH. An Agent therefore, an active Mind, or Spirit cannot be an Idea or like an Idea. Whence it ſhould ſeem to follow, that thoſe Words, which denote an active Principle, Soul, or Spirit, do not, in a ſtrict and proper Senſe, ſtand for Ideas: And yet they are not inſignificant neither: ſince I underſtand what is ſignified by the Term *I*, or *my ſelf*, or know what it means although it be no Idea, nor like an Idea, but that which thinks and wills and apprehends Ideas and operates about them. *ALC.* What would you infer from this? *EUPH.* What hath been inferred already, that Words may be ſignificant although they do not ſtand for Ideas *. The contrary whereof having been preſumed ſeems to have produced the Doctrine of abſtract Ideas. *ALC.* Will you not allow then that the Mind can abſtract? *EUPH.* I do not deny it may abſtract in a certain Senſe; inaſmuch as thoſe Things that can really exiſt, or be really perceived aſunder, may be conceived aſunder, or abſtracted one from the other; for inſtance a Man's Head from his Body, Colour from Motion, Figure from Weight. But it will not thence follow, that the Mind can frame abſtract general Ideas, DIAL. VII.

* *See the Principles of Humane Knowledge. Sect.* 135. *and the Introduction. Sect.* 20.

DIAL. which appear to be impoſſible. *ALC.* VII. And yet it is a current Opinion, that every ſubſtantive Name marks out and exhibits to the Mind one diſtinct Idea ſeparate from all others. *EUPH.* Pray, *Alciphron*, is not the Word *Number* ſuch a ſubſtantive Name? *ALC.* It is. *EUPH.* Do but try now whether you can frame an Idea of Number in abſtract excluſive of all Signs, Words, and Things numbered. I profeſs, for my own part, I cannot. *ALC.* Can it be ſo hard a Matter to form a ſimple Idea of Number, the Object of a moſt evident demonſtrable Science? Hold, let me ſee, if I can't abſtract the Idea of Number, from the numeral Names and Characters, and all particular numerable Things. Upon which *Alciphron* pauſed a While and then ſaid: To confeſs the Truth I do not find that I can. *EUPH.* But though, it ſeems, neither you nor I can form diſtinct ſimple Ideas of Number, we can nevertheleſs make a very proper and ſignificant Uſe of numeral Names. They direct us in the Diſpoſition and Management of our Affairs, and are of ſuch neceſſary Uſe, that we ſhould not know how to do without them. And yet, if other Mens Faculties may be judged of by mine, to attain a preciſe ſimple abſtract

Idea of Number, is as difficult as to comprehend any Myſtery in Religion. DIAL. VII.

IX. But to come to your own Inſtance, let us examine what Idea we can frame of Force abſtracted from Body, Motion, and outward ſenſible Effects. For my ſelf, I do not find that I have or can have any ſuch Idea. *ALC.* Surely every one knows what is meant by Force. *EUPH.* And yet I queſtion whether every one can form a diſtinct Idea of Force. Let me intreat you, *Alciphron*, be not amuſed by Terms, lay aſide the Word *Force*, and exclude every other Thing from your Thoughts, and then ſee what preciſe Idea you have of Force. *ALC.* Force is that in Bodies which produceth Motion and other ſenſible Effects. *EUPH.* It is then ſomething diſtinct from thoſe Effects. *ALC.* It is. *EUPH.* Be pleaſed now to exclude the Conſideration of its Subject and Effects, and contemplate Force it ſelf in its own preciſe Idea. *ALC.* I profeſs I find it no ſuch eaſy Matter. *EUPH.* Take your own Advice, and ſhut your Eyes to aſſiſt your Meditation. Upon this *Alciphron* having cloſed his Eyes, and muſed a few Minutes, declared he could make nothing of it. And that, replied *Euphranor*, which it ſeems neither you nor I

DIAL. VII. can frame an Idea of, by your own Remark of Mens Minds and Faculties being made much alike, we may ſuppoſe others have no more an Idea of than we. *ALC.* We may. *EUPH.* But, notwithſtanding all this, it is certain there are many Speculations, Reaſonings, and Diſputes, refined Subtilties and nice Diſtinctions about this ſame Force. And to explain its Nature, and diſtinguiſh the ſeveral Notions or Kinds of it, the Terms, *Gravity*, *Reaction*, *vis inertiæ*, *vis inſita*, *vis impreſſa*, *vis mortua*, *vis viva*, *impetus*, *momentum*, *ſolicitatio*, *conatus*, and divers other ſuch like Expreſſions have been uſed by learned Men: and no ſmall Controverſies have ariſen about the Notions or Definitions of theſe Terms. It has puzzled Men to know whether Force is ſpiritual or corporeal, whether it remains after Action, how it is transferred from one Body to another. Strange Paradoxes have been framed about its Nature, Properties, and Proportions: For inſtance, that contrary Forces may at once ſubſiſt in the ſame quieſcent Body: That the Force of Percuſſion in a ſmall Particle is infinite: For which, and other Curioſities of the ſame ſort, you may conſult *Borellus de vi percuſſionis*, the *Lezioni Academiche of Toricelli*, the Exercitations of

of *Hermanus*, and other Writers. It is well known to the learned World, what a Controverſy hath been carried on between Mathematicians, particularly Monſieur *Leibnitz* and Monſieur *Papin* in the *Leipſic Acta Eruditorum*, about the Proportion of Forces: whether they be each to other in a Proportion compounded of the ſimple Proportions of the Bodies and the Celerities, or in one compounded of the ſimple Proportion of the Bodies and the duplicate Proportion of the Celerities? A Point, it ſeems, not yet agreed: as indeed the Reality of the Thing it ſelf is made a Queſtion. *Leibnitz* diſtinguiſheth between the *niſus elementaris* and the *impetus*, which is formed by a Repetition of the *niſus elementaris*, and ſeems to think they do not exiſt in Nature, but are made only by an Abſtraction of the Mind. The ſame Author treating of original, active Force, to illuſtrate his Subject hath Recourſe to the ſubſtantial Forms and *Entelecheia* of *Ariſtotle*. And the ingenious *Toricelli* ſaith of Force and *Impetus*, that they are ſubtile Abſtracts and ſpiritual Quinteſſences: and concerning the *momentum* and the Velocity of heavy Bodies falling, he ſaith they are *un certo che*, and *un non ſo che*, that is in plain *Engliſh* he knows not what to make of them. Upon the

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DIAL. VII. the whole therefore, may we not pronounce, that excluding Body, Time, Space, Motion and all its ſenſible Meaſures and Effects, we ſhall find it as difficult to form an Idea of Force as of Grace? *ALC.* I do not know what to think of it.

X. *EUPH.* And yet, I preſume, you allow there are very evident Propoſitions or Theorems relating to Force, which contain uſeful Truths: for inſtance, that a Body with conjunct Forces deſcribes the Diagonal of a Parallelogram, in the ſame time that it would the Sides with ſeparate. Is not this a Principle of very extenſive Uſe? Doth not the Doctrine of the Compoſition and Reſolution of Forces depend upon it, and in Conſequence thereof, numberleſs Rules and Theorems directing Men how to act, and explaining *Phænomena* throughout the Mechanics and mathematical Philoſophy? And if, by conſidering this Doctrine of Force, Men arrive at the Knowledge of many Inventions in Mechanics, and are taught to frame Engines, by means of which Things difficult and otherwiſe impoſſible may be performed; and if the ſame Doctrine, which is ſo beneficial here below, ſerveth alſo as a Key to diſcover the Nature

ture of the Celeſtial Motions; ſhall we deny that it is of Uſe, either in Practice or Speculation, becauſe we have no diſtinct Idea of Force? Or that which we admit with Regard to *Force*, upon what Pretence can we deny concerning *Grace?* If there are Queries, Diſputes, Perplexities, Diverſity of Notions and Opinions about the one, ſo there are about the other alſo: if we can form no preciſe diſtinct Idea of the one, ſo neither can we of the other. Ought we not therefore by a Parity of Reaſon to conclude, there may be divers true and uſeful Proportions concerning the one as well as the other? And that Grace may be an Object of our Faith, and influence our Life and Actions, as a Principle deſtructive of evil Habits and productive of good ones, although we cannot attain a diſtinct Idea of it, ſeparate or abſtracted from God the Author, from Man the Subject, and from Virtue and Piety its Effects?

XI. Shall we not admit the ſame Method of arguing, the ſame Rules of Logic, Reaſon, and good Senſe to obtain in Things Spiritual and Things Corporeal, in Faith and Science? and ſhall we not uſe the ſame Candour, and make the ſame Allowances in examining the Revelations of

DIAL. VII. of God and the Inventions of Men? For ought I see, that Philosopher cannot be free from Bias and Prejudice, or be said to weigh Things in an equal Balance, who shall maintain the Doctrine of Force and reject that of Grace, who shall admit the abstract Idea of a Triangle, and at the same Time ridicule the Holy Trinity. But, however partial or prejudiced other Minute Philosophers might be, you have laid it down for a Maxim, that the same Logic, which obtains in other Matters, must be admitted in Religion. *LYS.* I think, *Alciphron*, it would be more prudent to abide by the Way of Wit and Humour, than thus to try Religion by the dry Test of Reason and Logic. *ALC.* Fear not: by all the Rules of right Reason, it is absolutely impossible that any Mystery, and least of all the Trinity, should really be the Object of Man's Faith. *EUPH.* I do not wonder you thought so, as long as you maintained that no Man could assent to a Proposition without perceiving or framing in his Mind distinct Ideas marked by the Terms of it. But although Terms are Signs, yet having granted that those Signs may be significant, though they should not suggest Ideas represented by them, provided they serve to regulate and influence

fluence our Wills, Paſſions, or Conduct, you have conſequently granted, that the Mind of Man may aſſent to Propoſitions containing ſuch Terms, when it is ſo directed or affected by them, notwithſtanding it ſhould not perceive diſtinct Ideas marked by thoſe Terms. Whence it ſeems to follow, that a Man may believe the Doctrine of the Trinity, if he finds it revealed in Holy Scripture, That the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt are God, and that there is but one God? Although he doth not frame in his Mind, any abſtract or diſtinct Ideas of Trinity, Subſtance, or Perſonality, provided, that this Doctrine of a Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier makes proper Impreſſions on his Mind, producing therein, Love, Hope, Gratitude, and Obedience, and thereby becomes a lively operative Principle influencing his Life and Actions, agreeably to that Notion of ſaving Faith which is required in a Chriſtian. This, I ſay whether right or wrong, ſeems to follow from your own Principles and Conceſſions. But for further Satisfaction, it may not be amiſs to inquire, whether there be any Thing parallel to this Chriſtian Faith in the Minute Philoſophy. Suppoſe, a fine Gentleman or Lady of Faſhion, who are too much employed to think

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DIAL. VII. think for themſelves, and are only Free-thinkers at ſecond Hand, have the Advantage of being betimes initiated in the Principles of your Sect, by converſing with Men of Depth and Genius, who have often declared it to be their Opinion, the World is governed either by Fate or by Chance, it matters not which: will you deny it poſſible for ſuch Perſons to yield their Aſſent to either of theſe Propoſitions? *ALC.* I will not. *EUPH.* And may not ſuch their Aſſent be properly called *Faith?* *ALC.* It may. *EUPH.* And yet it is poſſible, thoſe Diſciples of the Minute Philoſophy may not dive ſo deep, as to be able to frame any abſtract, or preciſe, or any determinate Idea whatſoever, either of Fate or of Chance. *ALC.* This too I grant. *EUPH.* So that according to you, this ſame Gentleman or Lady may be ſaid to believe or have Faith, where they have not Ideas. *ALC.* They may. *EUPH.* And may not this Faith or Perſuaſion produce real Effects, and ſhew it ſelf in the Conduct and Tenor of their Lives, freeing them from the Fears of Superſtition, and giving them a true Reliſh of the World, with a noble Indolence or Indifference about what comes after. *ALC.* It may. *EUPH.* And may not Chriſtians, with equal

equal Reaſon, be allowed to believe the Divinity of our Saviour, or that in him God and Man make one Perſon, and be verily perſuaded thereof, ſo far as for ſuch Faith or Belief to become a real Principle of Life and Conduct? inaſmuch as by virtue of ſuch Perſuaſion they ſubmit to his Government, believe his Doctrine, and practiſe his Precepts, although they frame no abſtract Idea of the Union between the Divine and Humane Nature; nor may be able to clear up the Notion of Perſon to the Contentment of a Minute Philoſopher. To me it ſeems evident, that if none but thoſe who had nicely examined, and could themſelves explain, the Principle of Individuation in Man, or untie the Knots and anſwer the Objections, which may be raiſed even about Humane Perſonal Identity, would require of us to explain the Divine Myſteries, we ſhould not be often called upon for a clear and diſtinct Idea of *Perſon* in relation to the Trinity, nor would the Difficulties on that Head be often objected to our Faith. *ALC.* Methinks, there is no ſuch Myſtery in Perſonal Identity. *EUPH.* Pray in what do you take it to conſiſt? *ALC.* In Conſciouſneſs. *EUPH.* Whatever is poſſible may be ſuppoſed. *ALC.* It may. *EUPH.* We will ſup-

DIAL. VII. suppose now (which is possible in the Nature of Things, and reported to be Fact) that a Person, through some violent Accident or Distemper, should fall into such a total Oblivion, as to lose all Consciousness of his past Life, and former Ideas. I ask, is he not still the same Person? *ALC.* He is the same Man, but not the same Person. Indeed you ought not to suppose that a Person loseth its former Consciousness; for this is impossible, though a Man perhaps may; but then he becomes another Person. In the same Person, it must be owned, some old Ideas may be lost, and some new ones got: but a total Change is inconsistent with Identity of Person. *EUPH.* Let us then suppose that a Person hath Ideas, and is conscious during a certain Space of Time, which we will divide into three equal Parts, whereof the later Terms are marked by the Letters, A, B, C. In the first part of Time, the Person gets a certain Number of Ideas, which are retained in A: during the second part of Time, he retains one Half of his old Ideas, and loseth the other Half, in place of which he acquires as many new ones: So that in B his Ideas are half old and half new. And in the third Part, we suppose him to lose the Remainder of the Ideas acquired in the First,

First, and to get new ones in their ſtead, which are retained in C, together with thoſe acquired in the ſecond Part of Time. Is this a poſſible fair Suppoſition? *ALC.* It is. *EUPH.* Upon theſe Premiſſes I am tempted to think, one may demonſtrate, that Perſonal Identity doth not conſiſt in Conſciouſneſs. *ALC.* As how? *EUPH.* You ſhall judge; but thus it ſeems to me. The Perſons in A and B are the ſame, being conſcious of common Ideas by Suppoſition. The Perſon in B is (for the ſame Reaſon) one and the ſame with the Perſon in C. Therefore the Perſon in A, is the ſame with the Perſon in C, by that undoubted Axiom, *Quæ conveniunt uni tertio conveniunt inter ſe.* But the Perſon in C hath no Idea in common with the Perſon in A. Therefore Perſonal Identity doth not conſiſt in Conſciouſneſs. What do you think, *Alciphron*, is not this a plain Inference? *ALC.* I tell you what I think: You will never aſſiſt my Faith, by puzzling my Knowledge. DIAL. VII.

XII. *EUPH.* There is, if I miſtake not, a Practical Faith, or Aſſent, which ſheweth it ſelf in the Will and Actions of a Man, although his Underſtanding may not be furniſhed with thoſe abſtract, preciſe, diſtinct Ideas, which, whatever, a

DIAL. VII. Philoſopher may pretend, are acknowledged to be above the Talents of common Men; among whom, nevertheleſs, may be found, even according to your own Conceſſion, many Inſtances of ſuch practical Faith, in other Matters which do not concern Religion. What ſhould hinder therefore, but that Doctrines relating to Heavenly Myſteries, might be taught in this ſaving Senſe to vulgar Minds, which you may well think incapable of all Teaching and Faith in the Senſe you ſuppoſe. Which miſtaken Senſe, ſaid *Crito*, has given occaſion to much profane and miſapplied Raillery. But all this may very juſtly be retorted on the Minute Philoſophers themſelves, who confound Scholaſticiſm with Chriſtianity, and impute to other Men thoſe Perplexities, Chimæras, and inconſiſtent Ideas, which are often the Workmanſhip of their own Brains, and proceed from their own wrong way of Thinking. Who doth not ſee that ſuch an ideal abſtracted Faith is never thought of by the Bulk of Chriſtians, Husbandmen, for inſtance, Artiſans, or Servants? Or what Footſteps are there in the Holy Scripture to make us think, that the Wiredrawing of abſtract Ideas was a Task injoined either Jews or Chriſtians? Is there any thing in the Law or the Prophets, the Evan-

Evangeliſts or Apoſtles, that looks like it? Every one, whoſe Underſtanding is not perverted by Science falſly ſo called, may ſee the ſaving Faith of Chriſtians is quite of another Kind, a vital operative Principle, productive of Charity and Obedience. *ALC.* What are we to think then of the Diſputes and Deciſions of the famous Council of *Nice*, and ſo many ſubſequent Councils? What was the Intention of thoſe venerable Fathers the *Homoouſians* and the *Homoiouſians?* Why did they diſturb themſelves and the World with hard Words, and ſubtile Controverſies? *CRI.* Whatever their Intention was, it could not be to beget nice abſtracted Ideas of Myſteries in the Minds of common Chriſtians, this being evidently impoſſible: Nor doth it appear that the Bulk of Chriſtian Men did in thoſe Days think it any part of their Duty, to lay aſide the Words, ſhut their Eyes, and frame thoſe abſtract Ideas; any more than Men now do of Force, Time, Number, or ſeveral other things, about which they nevertheleſs believe, know, argue, and diſpute. To me it ſeems, that, whatever was the Source of thoſe Controverſies, and howſoever they were managed, wherein Humane Infirmity muſt be ſuppoſed to have had its Share, the main End was not, on

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DIAL. VII. either ſide, to convey preciſe poſitive Ideas to the Minds of Men, by the uſe of thoſe conteſted Terms, but rather a negative Senſe, tending to exclude Polytheiſm on the one hand, and Sabellianiſm on the other *. *ALC.* But what ſhall we ſay of ſo many learned and ingenious Divines, who from time to time have obliged the World with new Explications of Myſteries, who, having themſelves profeſſedly laboured to acquire accurate Ideas, would recommend their Diſcoveries and Speculations to others for Articles of Faith? *CRI.* To all ſuch Innovators in Religion I would ſay with *Jerome*, "Why after "ſo many Centuries do you pretend to "teach us what was untaught before? "Why explain what neither *Peter* nor "*Paul* thought neceſſary to be ex-"plained?†" And it muſt be owned, that the Explication of Myſteries in Divinity, allowing the Attempt as fruitleſs as the Purſuit of the Philoſopher's Stone in Chymiſtry, or the Perpetual Motion in Mechanics, is no more than they, chargeable on the Profeſſion it ſelf, but only on the wrongheaded Profeſſors of it.

* Vid. Sozomen. l. 2. c. 8.

† Hieronym. ad Pammachium & Oceanum de erroribus Origenis.

XIII. It

XIII. It ſeems, that what hath been now ſaid, may be applied to other Myſteries of our Religion. Original Sin, for inſtance, a Man may find it impoſſible to form an Idea of in abſtract, or of the manner of its Tranſmiſſion, and yet the Belief thereof may produce in his Mind a ſalutary Senſe of his own Unworthineſs, and the Goodneſs of his Redeemer: from whence may follow good Habits, and from them good Actions, the genuine Effects of Faith: which conſidered in its true Light, is a thing neither repugnant nor incomprehenſible, as ſome Men would perſuade us, but ſuited even to vulgar Capacities, placed in the Will and Affections rather than in the Underſtanding, and producing holy Lives, rather than ſubtile Theories. Faith, I ſay, is not an indolent Perception, but an operative Perſuaſion of Mind, which ever worketh ſome ſuitable Action, Diſpoſition, or Emotion in thoſe who have it: as it were eaſy to prove and illuſtrate by innumerable Inſtances taken from Humane Affairs. And, indeed, while the Chriſtian Religion is conſidered as an Inſtitution fitted to ordinary Minds, rather than to the nicer Talents, whether improved or puzzled, of ſpeculative Men; and our Notions about Faith are accordingly taken from the DIAL. VII.

DIAL. VII. Commerce of the World, and Practice of Mankind, rather than from the peculiar Systems of Refiners; it will, I think, be no difficult Matter to conceive and justify the Meaning and Use of our Belief of Mysteries, against the most confident Assertions and Objections of the Minute Philosophers, who are easily to be caught in those very Snares, which they have spun and spread for others. And that Humour of Controversy, the Mother and Nurse of Heresies, would doubtless very much abate, if it was considered that things are to be rated, not by the Colour, Shape, or Stamp, so truly as by the Weight. If the Moment of Opinions had been by some litigious Divines made the Measure of their Zeal, it might have spared much Trouble both to themselves and others. Certainly one that takes his Notions of Faith, Opinion, and Assent from Common Sense, and Common Use, and has maturely weighed the Nature of Signs and Language, will not be so apt to controvert the Wording of a Mystery, or to break the Peace of the Church, for the sake of retaining or rejecting a Term. But, to convince you, by a plain Instance, of the efficacious necessary Use of Faith without Ideas: we will suppose a Man of the World, a Minute Philosopher, prodigal

prodigal and rapacious, one of large Ap- DIAL.
petites and narrow Circumſtances, who VII.
ſhall have it in his Power at once to ſeiſe upon a great Fortune by one villanous Act, a ſingle Breach of Truſt, which he can commit with Impunity and Secrecy: Is it not natural to ſuppoſe him arguing in this manner? All Mankind in their Senſes purſue their Intereſt. The Intereſts of this preſent Life are either of Mind, Body, or Fortune. If I commit this Fact my Mind will be eaſy (having nought to fear here or hereafter) my bodily Pleaſures will be multiplied, and my Fortune enlarged. Suppoſe now, one of your refined Theoriſts talks to him about the Harmony of Mind and Affections, inward Worth, Truth of Character, in one Word, the Beauty of Virtue; which is the only Intereſt he can propoſe, to turn the Scale againſt all other ſecular Intereſts and ſenſual Pleaſures; would it not, think you, be a vain Attempt? On the other hand, poſſeſs him with a thorough Belief or Perſuaſion, that he ſhall forfeit eternal Happineſs, and incur eternal Miſery: and this alone may ſuffice to turn the Scale. I ſay, in ſuch a Juncture what can the moſt plauſible and refined Philoſophy of your Sect offer, to diſſuade ſuch a Man from his Purpoſe, more than aſſuring him that

DIAL. VII. abſtracted Delight of the Mind, the Enjoyments of an interior moral Senſe, the Το καλὸν are what conſtitute his true Intereſt? And what Effect can this have on a Mind callous to all thoſe things, and at the ſame time ſtrongly affected with a Senſe of corporeal Pleaſures, and the outward Intereſt, Ornaments, and Conveniencies of Life? Whereas that very Man, do but produce in him a ſincere Belief of a future State, although it be a Myſtery, although it be what Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, nor hath it enter'd into the Heart of Man to conceive, he ſhall nevertheleſs, by virtue of ſuch Belief, be withheld from executing his wicked Project: and that for Reaſons which all Men can comprehend, though no body can the Object of them. I will allow the Points inſiſted on by your refined Moraliſts to be as lovely and excellent as you pleaſe to a reaſonable, reflecting, philoſophical Mind. But I will venture to ſay, That, as the World goes, few, very few, would be influenced by them. We ſee, therefore, the neceſſary Uſe as well as the powerful Effects of Faith, even where we have not Ideas.

XIV. *ALC.*

XIV. *ALC.* It ſeems, *Euphranor* and you would perſuade me into an Opinion, that there is nothing ſo ſingularly abſurd as we are apt to think, in the Belief of Myſteries: and that a Man need not renounce his Reaſon to maintain his Religion. But if this were true, how comes it to paſs, that, in proportion as Men abound in Knowledge, they dwindle in Faith? *EUPH.* O *Alciphron*, I have learned from you, that there is nothing like going to the Bottom of things, and analyſing them into their firſt Principles. I ſhall therefore make an Eſſay of this Method, for clearing up the Nature of Faith: with what Succeſs, I ſhall leave you to determine: for I dare not pronounce my ſelf on my own Judgment, whether it be right or wrong: But thus it ſeems to me. The Objections made to Faith are by no means an Effect of Knowledge, but proceed rather from an Ignorance of what Knowledge is: which Ignorance may poſſibly be found even in thoſe who paſs for Maſters of this or that particular Branch of Knowledge. Science and Faith agree in this, that they both imply an Aſſent of the Mind: And, as the Nature of the Firſt is moſt clear and evident, it ſhould be firſt conſidered in order to caſt a Light on the other. To trace things from their Original,

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DIAL. VII. nal, it seems that the Humane Mind, naturally furnished with the Ideas of things particular and concrete, and being design'd, not for the bare Intuition of Ideas, but for Action or Operation about them, and pursuing her own Happiness therein, stands in need of certain general Rules or Theorems to direct her Operations in this Pursuit: the supplying which Want is the true, original, reasonable End of studying the Arts and Sciences. Now these Rules being general, it follows, that they are not to be obtained by the meer Consideration of the original Ideas, or particular Things, but by the means of Marks or Signs, which, being so far forth universal, become the immediate Instruments and Materials of Science. It is not therefore by meer Contemplation of particular Things, and much less of their abstract general Ideas, that the Mind makes her Progress, but by an apposite Choice and skilful Management of Signs: For instance, Force and Number, taken in concrete with their Adjuncts, Subjects, and Signs, are what every one knows: and considered in abstract, so as making precise Ideas of themselves, they are what no Body can comprehend. That their abstract Nature, therefore, is not the Foundation of Science, is plain: And that barely

barely conſidering their Ideas in concrete, is not the Method to advance in the reſpective Sciences, is what every one that reflects may ſee; nothing being more evident, than that one, who can neither write nor read, in common Uſe underſtands the Meaning of Numeral Words, as well as the beſt Philoſopher or Mathematician. DIAL. VII.

XV. But here lies the Difference: the one who underſtands the Notation of Numbers, by means thereof is able to expreſs briefly and diſtinctly all the Variety and Degrees of Number, and to perform with Eaſe and Diſpatch ſeveral Arithmetical Operations, by the help of general Rules. Of all which Operations as the Uſe in Humane Life is very evident, ſo it is no leſs evident, that the performing them depends on the Aptneſs of the Notation. If we ſuppoſe rude Mankind without the Uſe of Language, it may be preſumed, they would be ignorant of Arithmetic: But the Uſe of Names, by the Repetition whereof in a certain Order they might expreſs endleſs Degrees of Number, would be the firſt Step towards that Science. The next Step would be, to deviſe proper Marks of a permanent Nature, and viſible to the Eye, the Kind and

DIAL. VII. and Order whereof must be chose with Judgment, and accommodated to the Names. Which Marking or Notation would, in proportion as it was apt and regular, facilitate the Invention and Application of general Rules, to assist the Mind in reasoning and judging, in extending, recording and communicating its Knowledge about Numbers: in which Theory and Operations, the Mind is immediately occupied about the Signs or Notes, by Mediation of which it is directed to act about Things, or Number in concrete (as the Logicians call it) without ever considering the simple, abstract, intellectual, general Idea of Number. I imagine one need not think much to be convinced, that the Science of Arithmetic, in its Rise, Operations, Rules, and Theorems, is altogether conversant about the artificial Use of Signs, Names, and Characters. These Names and Characters are universal, inasmuch as they are Signs. The Names are referred to Things, the Characters to Names, and both to Operation. The Names being few, and proceeding by a certain Analogy, the Characters will be more useful, the simpler they are, and the more aptly they express this Analogy. Hence the old Notation by Letters was more useful than Words written

ten at length: And the modern Notation by Figures, expreſſing the Progreſſion or Analogy of the Names by their ſimple Places, is much preferable to that for Eaſe and Expedition, as the Invention of Algebraical Symbols is to this for extenſive and general Uſe. As Arithmetic and Algebra are Sciences of great Clearneſs, Certainty, and Extent, which are immediately converſant about Signs, upon the skilful Uſe and Management whereof they intirely depend, ſo a little Attention to them may poſſibly help us to judge of the Progreſs of the Mind in other Sciences; which, though differing in Nature, Deſign, and Object, may yet agree in the general Methods of Proof and Inquiry.

XVI. If I miſtake not, all Sciences, ſo far as they are univerſal and demonſtrable by Humane Reaſon, will be found converſant about Signs as their immediate Object, though theſe in the Application are referred to Things: The Reaſon whereof is not difficult to conceive. For as the Mind is better acquainted with ſome ſort of Objects, which are earlier ſuggeſted to it, ſtrike it more ſenſibly, or are more eaſily comprehended than others, it is naturally led to ſubſtitute theſe Objects for ſuch

DIAL. VII. such as are more subtile, fleeting, or difficult to conceive. Nothing, I say, is more natural, than to make the Things we know, a Step towards those we do not know; and to explain and represent Things less familiar by others which are more so. Now, it is certain we imagine before we reflect, and we perceive by Sense before we imagine: and of all our Senses the Sight is the most clear, distinct, various, agreeable, and comprehensive. Hence it is natural to assist the Intellect by the Imagination, the Imagination by Sense, and the other Senses by Sight. Hence, Figures, Metaphors, and Types. We illustrate spiritual Things by corporeal: we substitute Sounds for Thoughts, and written Letters for Sounds, Emblems, Symbols, and Hieroglyphics for Things too obscure to strike, and too various or too fleeting to be retained. We substitute Things imaginable for things intelligible, sensible Things for imaginable, smaller Things for those that are too great to comprehend easily, and greater Things for such as are too small to be discerned distinctly, present Things for absent, permanent for perishing, and visible for invisible. Hence the Use of Models and Diagrams. Hence right Lines are substituted for Time, Velocity, and other things

things of very different Natures. Hence we ſpeak of Spirits in a figurative Style, expreſſing the Operations of the Mind by Alluſions and Terms, borrowed from ſenſible Things, ſuch as *apprehend*, *conceive*, *reflect*, *diſcourſe*, and ſuch like: And hence thoſe Allegories which illuſtrate Things intellectual by Viſions exhibited to the Fancy. *Plato*, for inſtance, repreſents the Mind preſiding in her Vehicle by the Driver of a winged Chariot, which ſometimes moults and droops and is drawn by two Horſes, the one good and of a good Race, the other of a contrary Kind; ſymbolically expreſſing the Tendency of the Mind towards the Divinity, as ſhe ſoars or is born aloft by two Inſtincts like Wings, the one in the Intellect towards Truth, the other in the Will towards Excellence, which Inſtincts moult or are weaken'd by ſenſual Inclinations; expreſſing alſo her alternate Elevations and Depreſſions, the Struggles between Reaſon and Appetite, like Horſes that go an unequal Pace, or draw different ways, embarraſſing the Soul in her Progreſs to Perfection. I am inclined to think the Doctrine of Signs a Point of great Importance, and general Extent, which, if duly conſidered, would caſt no ſmall Light upon Things, and afford

DIAL. VII. ford a juſt and genuine Solution of many Difficulties.

XVII. Thus much, upon the whole, may be ſaid of all Signs: that they do not always ſuggeſt Ideas ſignified to the Mind: that when they ſuggeſt Ideas, they are not general abſtract Ideas: that they have other Uſes beſides barely ſtanding for and exhibiting Ideas, ſuch as raiſing proper Emotions, producing certain Diſpoſitions or Habits of Mind, and directing our Actions in purſuit of that Happineſs, which is the ultimate End and Deſign, the primary Spring and Motive, that ſets rational Agents at work: that the true End of Speech, Reaſon, Science, Faith, Aſſent, in all its different Degrees, is not meerly, or principally, or always the imparting or acquiring of Ideas, but rather ſomething of an active, operative Nature, tending to a conceived Good; which may ſometimes be obtained, not only although the Ideas marked are not offered to the Mind, but even although there ſhould be no Poſſibility of offering or exhibiting any ſuch Idea to the Mind: for inſtance, the Algebraic Mark, which denotes the Root of a negative Square, hath its Uſe in Logiſtic Operations, although it be impoſſible to form an Idea of any ſuch

such Quantity. And what is true of Algebraic Signs, is also true of Words or Language, modern Algebra being in fact a more short, appositе, and artificial Sort of Language, and it being possible to express by Words at length, though less conveniently, all the Steps of an Algebraical Process. And it must be confessed, that even the Mathematical Sciences themselves, which above all others are reckoned the most clear and certain, if they are considered, not as Instruments to direct our Practice, but as Speculations to employ our Curiosity, will be found to fall short in many Instances of those clear and distinct Ideas, which, it seems, the Minute Philosophers of this Age, whether knowingly or ignorantly, expect and insist upon in the Mysteries of Religion. DIAL. VII.

XVIII. Be the Science or Subject what it will, whensoever Men quit Particulars for Generalities, things Concrete for Abstractions, when they forsake practical Views, and the useful Purposes of Knowledge for barren Speculation, considering Means and Instruments as ultimate Ends, and labouring to obtain precise Ideas which they suppose indiscriminately annexed to all Terms, they will be sure to embarrass themselves with Difficulties and Disputes.

DIAL. VII. putes. Such are those which have sprung up in Geometry about the Nature of the Angle of Contact, the Doctrine of Proportions, of Indivisibles, Infinitesimals, and divers other Points; notwithstanding all which, that Science is very rightly esteemed an excellent and useful one, and is really found to be so in many Occasions of Humane Life; wherein it governs and directs the Actions of Men, so that by the Aid or Influence thereof those Operations become just and accurate, which would otherwise be faulty and uncertain. And from a parity of Reason, we should not conclude any other Doctrines which govern, influence, or direct the Mind of Man to be, any more than that, the less true or excellent, because they afford Matter of Controversy and useless Speculation to curious and licentious Wits: particularly those Articles of our Christian Faith, which, in proportion as they are believed, persuade, and, as they persuade, influence the Lives and Actions of Men. As to the Perplexity of Contradictions and abstracted Notions, in all parts whether of Humane Science or Divine Faith, Cavillers may equally object, and unwary Persons incur, while the judicious avoid it. There is no need to depart from the received Rules of Reasoning to justify the Belief

Belief of Christians. And if any pious Men think otherwise, it may be supposed an Effect, not of Religion or of Reason, but only of Humane Weakness. If this Age be singularly productive of Infidels, I shall not therefore conclude it to be more knowing, but only more presuming, than former Ages: And their Conceit, I doubt, is not the Effect of Consideration. To me it seems, that the more thoroughly and extensively any Man shall consider and scan the Principles, Objects, and Methods of proceeding in Arts and Sciences, the more he will be convinced, there is no Weight in those plausible Objections that are made against the Mysteries of Faith, which it will be no difficult Matter for him to maintain or justify in the received Method of arguing, on the common Principles of Logic, and by numberless avow'd parallel Cases, throughout the several Branches of Humane Knowledge, in all which the Supposition of abstract Ideas creates the same Difficulties. *ALC.* According to this Doctrine, all Points may be alike maintained. There will be nothing absurd in Popery, not even Transubstantiation. *CRI.* Pardon me. This Doctrine justifies no Article of Faith which is not contained in Scripture, or which is repugnant to Humane Reason,

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DIAL. VII. which implies a Conrradiction, or which leads to Idolatry or Wickedneſs of any Kind: all which is very different from our not having a diſtinct or an abſtract Idea of a Point.

XIX. *ALC.* I will allow, *Euphranor*, this Reaſoning of yours to have all the Force you meant it ſhould have. I freely own there may be Myſteries: that we may believe, where we do not underſtand: and that Faith may be of uſe although its Object is not diſtinctly apprehended. In a word, I grant there may be Faith and Myſteries in other things but not in Religion: And that for this plain Reaſon: becauſe it is abſurd to ſuppoſe, there ſhould be any ſuch thing as Religion: and if there be no Religion it follows there cannot be Religious Faith or Myſteries. Religion, it is evident, implies the Worſhip of a God, which Worſhip ſuppoſeth Rewards and Puniſhments, which ſuppoſe Merits and Demerits, Actions good and evil, and theſe ſuppoſe Humane Liberty, a thing impoſſible: and conſequently Religion a thing built thereon muſt be an unreaſonable abſurd thing. There can be no rational Hopes or Fears where there is no Guilt, nor any Guilt where there is nothing done, but what unavoidably fol-

lows from the Structure of the World and the Laws of Motion. Corporeal Objects ſtrike on the Organs of Senſe, whence enſues a Vibration in the Nerves, which, being communicated to the Soul or Animal Spirit in the Brain or Root of the Nerves, produceth therein that Motion called Volition: And this produceth a new Determination in the Spirits, cauſing them to flow into ſuch Nerves as muſt neceſſarily by the Laws of Mechaniſm produce ſuch certain Actions. This being the Caſe, it follows that thoſe things, which vulgarly paſs for Humane Actions, are to be eſteemed Mechanical, and that they are falſly aſcribed to a free Principle. There is therefore no Foundation for Praiſe or Blame, Fear or Hope, Reward or Puniſhment, nor conſequently for Religion, which, as I obſerved before, is built upon and ſuppoſeth thoſe things. *EUPH.* You imagine, *Alciphron*, if I rightly underſtand you, that Man is a ſort of Organ played on by outward Objects, which according to the different Shape and Texture of the Nerves produce different Motions and Effects therein. *ALC.* Man may, indeed, be fitly compared to an Organ: but a Puppet is the very Thing. You muſt know, that certain Particles iſſuing forth in right Lines from all ſenſible Objects

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DIAL. VII. compoſe ſo many Rays, or Filaments, which drive, draw, and actuate every part of the Soul and Body of Man, juſt as Threads or Wires do the Joints of that little wooden Machine vulgarly called a *Puppet:* with this only Difference that the latter are groſs and viſible to common Eyes, whereas the former are too fine and ſubtile to be diſcerned by any but a ſagacious Free-thinker. This admirably accounts for all thoſe Operations, which we have been taught to aſcribe to a thinking Principle within us. *EUPH.* This is an ingenious Thought, and muſt be of great Uſe in freeing Men from all Anxiety about moral Notions, as it transfers the Principle of Action from the Humane Soul to things outward and foreign. But I have my Scruples about it. For you ſuppoſe the Mind in a literal Senſe to be moved, and its Volitions to be meer Motions. Now, if another ſhould affirm, as it is not impoſſible ſome or other may, that the Soul is incorporeal, and that Motion is one thing and Volition another, I would fain know how you could make your Point clear to ſuch a one. It muſt be owned very clear to thoſe who admit the Soul to be corporeal, and all her Acts to be but ſo many Motions. Upon this Suppoſition, indeed, the Light wherein you

you place Humane Nature is no leſs true, than it is fine and new. But let any one deny this Suppoſition, which is eaſily done, and the whole Superſtructure falls to the Ground. If we grant the abovementioned Points, I will not deny a fatal Neceſſity muſt enſue. But I ſee no reaſon for granting them. On the contrary it ſeems plain, that Motion and Thought are two things as really and as manifeſtly diſtinct as a Triangle and a Sound. It ſeems therefore, that in Order to prove the Neceſſity of Humane Actions, you ſuppoſe what wants Proof as much as the very Point to be proved. DIAL. VII.

XX. *ALC.* But ſuppoſing the Mind incorporeal, I ſhall, nevertheleſs, be able to prove my Point. Not to amuſe you with far-fetched Arguments, I ſhall only deſire you to look into your own Breaſt and obſerve how things paſs there, when an Object offers it ſelf to the Mind. Firſt the Underſtanding conſiders it: in the next place the Judgment decrees about it, as a thing to be choſen or rejected, to be omitted or done, in this or that manner: And this Decree of the Judgment doth neceſſarily determine the Will, whoſe Office is meerly to execute what is ordained by another Faculty: Conſequently

DIAL. VII. there is no such thing as Freedom of the Will. For that which is necessary cannot be free. In Freedom there should be an Indifference to either side of the Question, a Power to act or not to act, without Prescription or Control: and without this Indifference and this Power, it is evident the Will cannot be free. But it is no less evident, that the Will is not indifferent in its Actions, being absolutely determined and governed by the Judgment. Now whatever moves the Judgment, whether the greatest present Uneasiness, or the greatest apparent Good, or whatever else it be, it is all one to the Point in hand. The Will being ever concluded and controlled by the Judgment is in all Cases alike under Necessity. There is, indeed, throughout the whole of Humane Nature, nothing like a Principle of Freedom, every Faculty being determined in all its Acts by something foreign to it. The Understanding, for instance, cannot alter its Idea, but must necessarily see it such as it presents it self. The Appetites by a natural Necessity are carried towards their respective Objects. Reason cannot infer indifferently any thing from any thing, but is limited by the Nature and Connexion of Things, and the eternal Rules of Reasoning. And as this is confessedly the Case

Caſe of all other Faculties, ſo it equally holds with reſpect to the Will it ſelf, as hath been already ſhewn. And if we may credit the Divine Characterizer of our Times, this above all others muſt be allowed the moſt ſlaviſh Faculty. "Appetite (ſaith that noble Writer) which is "elder Brother to Reaſon, being the Lad "of ſtronger Growth, is ſure on every "Conteſt to take the Advantage of drawing all to his own Side: And Will, ſo "highly boaſted, is but at beſt a Foot-"ball or Top between thoſe Youngſters "who prove very unfortunately matched, "till the youngeſt, inſtead of now and "then a Kick or Laſh beſtow'd to little "purpoſe, forſakes the Ball or Top it "ſelf, and begins to lay about his elder "Brother." *CRI.* This beautiful Parable for Style and Manner might equal thoſe of a known *Engliſh* Writer, in low Life renowned for Allegory, were it not a little incorrect, making the weaker Lad find his Account in laying about the ſtronger. *ALC.* This is helped by ſuppoſing the ſtronger Lad the greater Coward. But, be that as it will, ſo far as it relates to the Point in hand, this is a clear State of the Caſe. The ſame Point may be alſo proved from the Preſcience of God. That which is certainly foreknown

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DIAL. VII. foreknown will certainly be. And what is certain is neceſſary. And neceſſary Actions cannot be the Effect of Free-will. Thus you have this fundamental Point of our Free-thinking Philoſophy demonſtrated different ways. *EUPH.* Tell me, *Alciphron*, do you think it implies a Contradiction, that God ſhould make a Creature Free? *ALC.* I do not. *EUPH.* It is then poſſible there may be ſuch a thing. *ALC.* This I do not deny. *EUPH.* You can therefore conceive and ſuppoſe ſuch a Free Agent. *ALC.* Admitting that I can; what then? *EUPH.* Would not ſuch an one think that he acted? *ALC.* He would. *EUPH.* And condemn himſelf for ſome Actions and approve himſelf for others? *ALC.* This too I grant. *EUPH.* Would he not think he deſerved Reward or Puniſhment? *ALC.* He would. *EUPH.* And are not all theſe Characters actually found in Man? *ALC.* They are, *EUPH.* Tell me now, what other Character of your ſuppoſed Free Agent may not actually be found in Man? For if there is none ſuch, we muſt conclude that Man hath all the Marks of a Free Agent. *ALC.* Let me ſee! I was certainly overſeen in granting it poſſible, even for Almighty Power, to make ſuch a thing as a Free Agent. I wonder how I came to make

make such an absurd Concession, after what had been, as I observed before, demonstrated so many different ways. DIAL. VII.

EUPH. Certainly whatever is possible may be supposed: And whatever doth not imply a Contradiction is possible to an infinite Power: Therefore if a rational Agent implieth no Contradiction, such a Being may be supposed. Perhaps from this Supposition I might infer Man to be free: But I will not suppose him that free Agent; since, it seems, you pretend to have demonstrated the contrary. O *Alciphron*, it is vulgarly observed that Men judge of others by themselves. But in judging of me by this Rule, you may be mistaken. Many things are plain to one of your Sagacity, which are not so to me, who am often puzzled rather than enlightened by those very Proofs, that with you pass for clear and evident. And, indeed, be the Inference never so just, yet so long as the Premises are not clear, I cannot be thoroughly convinced. You must give me leave therefore to propose some Questions, the Solution of which may perhaps shew what at present I am not able to discern. *ALC.* I shall leave what hath been said with you, to consider and ruminate upon. It is now time to set out on our Journey: there is,

DIAL. VII. therefore, no room for a long String of Queſtion and Anſwer.

XXI. *EUPH.* I ſhall then only beg leave in a ſummary Manner, to make a Remark or two on what you have advanced. In the firſt place I obſerve, you take that for granted which I cannot grant, when you aſſert whatever is certain the ſame to be neceſſary. To me, certain and neceſſary ſeem very different; there being nothing in the former Notion that implies Conſtraint, nor conſequently which may not conſiſt with a Man's being accountable for his Actions. If it is foreſeen that ſuch an Action ſhall be done: may it not alſo be foreſeen that it ſhall be an Effect of humane Choice and Liberty? In the next place I obſerve, that you very nicely abſtract and diſtinguiſh the Actions of the Mind, Judgment, and Will: That you make uſe of ſuch Terms as Power, Faculty, Act, Determination, Indifference, Freedom, Neceſſity, and the like, as if they ſtood for diſtinct abſtract Ideas: And that this Suppoſition ſeems to enſnare the Mind into the ſame Perplexities and Errors, which, in all other Inſtances, are obſerved to attend the Doctrine of Abſtraction. It is ſelf evident, that there is ſuch a thing as Motion; and yet there have been found Philo-

Philoſophers, who, by refined Reaſoning, wou'd undertake to prove there was no ſuch thing. Walking before them was thought the proper Way to confute thoſe ingenious Men. It is no leſs evident, that Man is a free Agent: and though by abſtracted Reaſonings you ſhou'd puzzle me, and ſeem to prove the contrary, yet ſo long as I am conſcious of my own Actions, this inward Evidence of plain Fact will bear me up againſt all your Reaſonings, however ſubtile and refined. The confuting plain Points by obſcure ones, may perhaps convince me of the Ability of your Philoſophers, but never of their Tenets. I cannot conceive why the acute *Cratylus* ſhould ſuppoſe a Power of Acting in the Appetite and Reaſon, and none at all in the Will? Allowing, I ſay, the Diſtinction of three ſuch Beings in the Mind, I do not ſee how this could be true. But if I cannot abſtract and diſtinguiſh ſo many Beings in the Soul of Man ſo accurately as you do, I do not find it neceſſary, ſince it is evident to me in the groſs and concrete that I am a free Agent. Nor will it avail to ſay, the Will is governed by the Judgment, or determined by the Object, while, in every ſudden common Cauſe, I cannot diſcern nor abſtract the Decree of the Judgment from the Command of the Will; while

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DIAL. VII. while I know the ſenſible Object to be abſolutely inert: And laſtly, while I am conſcious that I am an active Being, who can and do determine my ſelf. If I ſhould ſuppoſe things ſpiritual to be corporeal, or refine things actual and real into general abſtracted Notions, or by metaphyſical Skill ſplit things ſimple and individual into manifold Parts, I do not know what may follow: But if I take things as they are, and ask any plain untutored Man, whether he acts or is free in this or that particular Action, he readily aſſents, and I as readily believe him from what I find within. And thus, by an Induction of Particulars, I may conclude Man to be a free Agent, although I may be puzzled to define or conceive a Notion of Freedom in general and abſtract. And if Man be free, he is plainly accountable. But if you ſhall define, abſtract, ſuppoſe, and it ſhall follow that according to your Definitions, Abſtractions, and Suppoſitions, there can be no Freedom in Man, and you ſhall thence infer that he is not accountable, I ſhall make bold to depart from your metaphyſical abſtracted Senſe, and appeal to the common Senſe of Mankind.

XXII. If we conſider the Notions that obtain in the World of Guilt and Merit, Praiſe

Praiſe and Blame, accountable and unac- DIAL.
countable, we ſhall find the common Que- VII.
ſtion in order to applaud or cenſure, ac-
quit or condemn a Man, is, whether he did ſuch an Action? and whether he was himſelf when he did it? which comes to the ſame thing. It ſhould ſeem therefore that in the ordinary Commerce of Mankind, any Perſon is eſteemed accountable ſimply as he is an Agent. And though you ſhould tell me that Man is inactive, and that the ſenſible Objects act upon him, yet my own Experience aſſures me of the contrary. I know I act, and what I act I am accountable for. And if this be true, the Foundation of Religion and Morality remains unſhaken. Religion, I ſay, is concerned no farther than that Man ſhould be accountable: And this he is according to my Senſe, and the common Senſe of the World, if he acts: and that he doth act is ſelf evident. The Grounds, therefore, and Ends of Religion are ſecured: whether your philoſophic Notion of Liberty agrees with Man's Actions or no; and whether his Actions are certain or contingent; the Queſtion being not whether he did it with a Free Will? or what determined his Will? not, whether it was certain or foreknown that he would do it? but only whether he did it wilfully? as what muſt entitle him

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DIAL. VII. to the Guilt or Merit of it. *ALC.* But ſtill, the Queſtion recurs, whether Man be Free? *EUPH.* To determine this Queſtion, ought we not firſt to determine what is meant by the word *Free? ALC.* We ought. *EUPH.* In my Opinion, a Man is ſaid to be Free, ſo far forth as he can do what he will. Is this ſo, or is it not? *ALC.* It ſeems ſo. *EUPH.* Man therefore acting according to his Will, is to be accounted Free. *ALC.* This I admit to be true in the Vulgar Senſe. But a Philoſopher goes higher, and inquires whether Man be free to will? *EUPH.* That is, whether he can will as he wills? I know not how Philoſophical it may be to ask this Queſtion, but in ſeems very idle. The Notions of Guilt, and Merit, Juſtice and Reward are in the Minds of Men, antecedent to all Metaphyſical Diſquiſitions: And according to thoſe received natural Notions, it is not doubted that Man is accountable, that he acts, and is ſelf-determined.

XXIII. But a Minute Philoſopher ſhall, in virtue of wrong Suppoſitions, confound things moſt evidently diſtinct; Body, for inſtance, with Spirit, Motion with Volition, Certainty with Neceſſity; and an Abſtracter or Refiner ſhall ſo analyſe the moſt

ſimple

simple instantaneous Act of the Mind, as to distinguish therein divers Faculties and Tendencies, Principles and Operations, Causes and Effects; and having abstracted, supposed, and reasoned upon Principles gratuitous and obscure, he will conclude it is no Act at all, and Man no Agent, but a Puppet, or an Organ play'd on by outward Objects, and his Will a Top or a Foot-ball. And this passeth for Philosophy and Free-thinking. Perhaps this may be what it passeth for, but it by no means seems a natural or just way of thinking. To me it seems, that if we begin from Things particular and concrete, and thence proceed to general Notions and Conclusions, there will be no Difficulty in this Matter. But if we begin with Generalities, and lay our Foundation in abstract Ideas, we shall find our selves entangled and lost in a Labyrinth of our own making. I need not observe, what every one must see, the ridicule of proving Man no Agent, and yet pleading for Free Thought and Action, of setting up at once for Advocates of Liberty and Necessity. I have hastily thrown together these Hints or Remarks, on what you call a fundamental Article of the Minute Philosophy, and your Method of proving it, which seems to furnish an admirable Specimen of the

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DIAL. VII. Sophiſtry of abſtract Ideas. If in this ſummary way I have been more dogmatical than became me, you muſt excuſe what you occaſioned, by declining a joint and leiſurely Examination of the Truth. *ALC.* I think we have examined Matters ſufficiently. *CRI.* To all you have ſaid againſt humane Liberty, it is a ſufficient Anſwer to obſerve that your Arguments proceed upon an erroneous Suppoſition, either of the Soul's being corporeal, or of abſtract Ideas: not to mention other groſs Miſtakes and gratuitous Principles. You might as well ſuppoſe, that the Soul is red or blue, as that it is ſolid. You might as well make the Will any thing elſe as Motion. And whatever you infer from ſuch Premiſes, which (to ſpeak in the ſofteſt manner) are neither proved nor probable, I make no difficulty to reject. You diſtinguiſh in all humane Actions between the laſt Decree of the Judgment and the Act of the Will. You confound Certainty with Neceſſity: you inquire, and your Inquiry amounts to an abſurd Queſtion: whether Man can will as he wills? As evidently true as is this identical Propoſition, ſo evidently falſe muſt that way of thinking be, which led you to make a Queſtion of it. You take for granted, that the Mind is inactive, but that

that its Ideas act upon it: as if the contrary were not evident to every Man of common Sense, who cannot but know, that it is the Mind which considers its Ideas, chooses, rejects, examines, deliberates, decrees, in one word acts about them, and not they about it. Upon the whole, your Premises being obscure and false, the fundamental Point, which you pretend to demonstrate so many different ways, proves neither Sense nor Truth in any. And on the other hand, there is not need of much Inquiry to be convinced of two Points, than which none are more evident, more obvious, and more universally admitted by Men of all sorts, learned or unlearned, in all Times and Places, to wit, that Man acts and is accountable for his Actions. Whatever Abstracters, Refiners, or Men prejudiced to a false Hypothesis may pretend, it is, if I mistake not, evident to every thinking Man of common Sense, that humane Minds are so far from being Engines or Foot-balls, acted upon and bandied about by corporeal Objects, without any inward Principle of Freedom or Action, that the only original true Notions that we have of Freedom, Agent, or Action, are obtained by reflecting on our selves, and the Operations of our own Minds. The Singularity and Credulity of Minute Philoso-

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DIAL. VII. losophers, who suffer themselves to be abused by the Paralogisms of three or four eminent Patriarchs of Infidelity in the last Age, is, I think, not to be matched; there being no Instance of bigoted Superstition, the Ringleaders whereof have been able to seduce their Followers, more openly and more widely from the plain Dictates of Nature and common Sense.

XXIV. *ALC.* It has been always an Objection against the Discoverers of Truth, that they depart from received Opinions. The Character of Singularity is a Tax on Free-thinking: And as such we most willingly bear it, and glory in it. A Genuine Philosopher is never modest in a false Sense, to the preferring Authority before Reason, or an old and common Opinion before a true one. Which false Modesty, as it discourages Men from treading in untrodden Paths, or striking out new Light, is above all other Qualities the greatest Enemy to Free-thinking. *CRI.* Authority in disputable Points will have its Weight with a judicious Mind, which yet will follow Evidence wherever it leads. Without preferring we may allow it a good Second to Reason. Your Gentlemen, therefore, of the Minute Philosophy, may spare a World of Common Place upon Reason, and Light, and

and Diſcoveries. We are not attached to Authority againſt Reaſon, nor afraid of untrodden Paths that lead to Truth, and are ready to follow a new Light when we are ſure it is no *ignis fatuus*. Reaſon may oblige a Man to believe againſt his Inclinations: but why ſhould a Man quit ſalutary Notions for others not leſs unreaſonable than pernicious? Your Schemes, and Principles, and boaſted Demonſtrations have been at large propoſed and examined. You have ſhifted your Notions, ſucceſſively retreated from one Scheme to another, and in the End renounced them all. Your Objections have been treated in the ſame Manner, and with the ſame Event. If we except all that relates to the Errors and Faults of particular Perſons, and Difficulties which, from the Nature of Things, we are not obliged to explain; it is ſurpriſing to ſee, after ſuch magnificent Threats, how little remains, that can amount to a pertinent Objection againſt the Chriſtian Religion. What you have produced has been tried by the fair Teſt of Reaſon: and though you ſhould hope to prevail by Ridicule when you cannot by Reaſon, yet in the upſhot I apprehend you will find it impracticable to deſtroy all Senſe of Religion. Make your Countrymen ever ſo vicious, ignorant,

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rant, and profane, Men will ſtill be diſpoſed to look up to a ſupreme Being. Religion, right or wrong, will ſubſiſt in ſome Shape or other, and ſome Worſhip there will ſurely be either of God or the Creature. As for your Ridicule, can any thing be more ridiculous, than to ſee the moſt unmeaning Men of the Age ſet up for Free-thinkers, Men ſo ſtrong in Aſſertion, and yet ſo weak in Argument; Advocates for Freedom introducing a Fatality, Patriots trampling on the Laws of their Country, and Pretenders to Virtue, deſtroying the Motives of it? Let any impartial Man but caſt an Eye on the Opinions of the Minute Philoſophers, and then ſay if any thing can be more ridiculous, than to believe ſuch things, and at the ſame time laugh at Credulity.

XXV. *LYS.* Say what you will, we have the Laughers on our ſide: And as for your Reaſoning I take it to be another Name for Sophiſtry. *CRI.* And I ſuppoſe by the ſame Rule you take your own Sophiſms for Arguments. To ſpeak plainly, I know no ſort of Sophiſm that is not employed by Minute Philoſophers againſt Religion. They are guilty of a *Petitio Principii*, in taking for granted that we believe Contradictions; of *non*

Cauſa pro Cauſa, in affirming that uncharitable Feuds and Diſcords are the Effects of Chriſtianity; of *Ignoratio elenchi*, in expecting Demonſtration where we pretend only to Faith. If I was not afraid to offend the Delicacy of polite Ears, nothing were eaſier than to aſſign Inſtances of every kind of Sophiſm, which would ſhew how skilful your own Philoſophers are in the Practice of that Sophiſtry you impute to others. *EUPH.* For my own part, if Sophiſtry be the Art or Faculty of deceiving other Men, I muſt acquit theſe Gentlemen of it. They ſeem to have led me a Progreſs through Atheiſm, Libertiniſm, Enthuſiaſm, Fataliſm, not to convince me of the Truth of any of them, ſo much as to confirm me in my own way of thinking. They have expoſed their fairy Ware not to cheat but divert us. As I know them to be profeſſed Maſters of Ridicule, ſo in a ſerious Senſe I know not what to make of them. *ALC.* You do not know what to make of us! I ſhould be ſorry you did. He muſt be a ſuperficial Philoſopher that is ſoon fathomed. DIAL. VII.

XXVI. *CRI.* The ambiguous Character is, it ſeems, the ſure way to Fame and Eſteem in the learned World, as it ſtands conſti-

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tuted at preſent. When the Ingenious Reader is at a Loſs to determine whether his Author be Atheiſt or Deiſt or Polytheiſt, Stoic or Epicurean, Sceptic or Dogmatiſt, Infidel or Enthuſiaſt, in jeſt or in earneſt, he concludes him without Heſitation to be ænigmatical and profound. In fact, it is true of the moſt admired Writers of the Age, That no Man alive can tell what to make of them, or what they would be at. *ALC.* We have among us Moles that dig deep under Ground, and Eagles that ſoar out of ſight. We can act all Parts and become all Opinions, putting them on or off with great freedom of Wit and Humour. *EUPH.* It ſeems then you are a Pair of inſcrutable, unfathomable, faſhionable Philoſophers. *ALC.* It cannot be denied. *EUPH.* But, I remember, you ſet out with an open dogmatical Air, and talked of plain Principles and evident Reaſoning, promiſed to make things as clear as Noon-day, to extirpate wrong Notions and plant right in their ſtead. Soon after, you began to recede from your firſt Notions and adopt others: you advanced one while and retreated another, yielded and retracted, ſaid and unſaid: And after having followed you through ſo many untrodden Paths and intricate Mazes I find my ſelf never the nearer.

nearer. *ALC.* Did we not tell you the Gentlemen of our Sect are great Proficients in Raillery? *EUPH.* But, methinks, it is a vain Attempt, for a plain Man of any ſettled Belief or Principles to engage with ſuch ſlippery, fugitive, changeable Philoſophers. It ſeems as if a Man ſhould ſtand ſtill in the ſame place, while his Adverſary chooſes and changes his Situation, has full Range and Liberty to traverſe the Field, and attack him on all Sides and in all Shapes, from a nearer or farther diſtance, on Horſe-back or on Foot, in light or heavy Armour, in cloſe Fight or with miſſive Weapons. *ALC.* It muſt be owned, a Gentleman hath great Advantage over a ſtrait-laced Pedant or Bigot. *EUPH.* But after all, what am I the better for the Converſation of two ſuch knowing Gentlemen? I hoped to have unlearned my Errors, and to have learned Truths from you, but, to my great Diſappointment, I do not find that I am either untaught or taught. *ALC.* To unteach Men their Prejudices is a difficult Task: And this muſt firſt be done, before we can pretend to teach them the Truth. Beſides, we have at preſent no Time to prove and argue. *EUPH.* But ſuppoſe my Mind white Paper, and without being at any Pains to extirpate my Opini- DIAL. VII.

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DIAL. VII. ons, or prove your own, only ſay what you would write thereon, or what you would teach me in caſe I were teachable. Be for once in earneſt, and let me know ſome one Concluſion of yours before we part: or I ſhall intreat *Crito* to violate the Laws of Hoſpitality towards thoſe, who have violated the Laws of Philoſophy, by hanging out falſe Lights to one benighted in Ignorance and Error. I appeal to you (ſaid he turning to *Crito*) whether theſe Philoſophical Knight-errants ſhould not be confined in this Caſtle of yours, till they make Reparation. *Euphranor* has Reaſon, ſaid *Crito*, and my Sentence is that you remain here in durance, till you have done ſomething towards ſatisfying the Engagement I am under, having promiſed, he ſhould know your Opinions from your ſelves, which you alſo agreed to.

XXVII. *ALC.* Since it muſt be ſo, I will now reveal what I take to be the Sum and Subſtance, the grand Arcanum and ultimate Concluſion of our Sect, and that in two Words, ΠΑΝΤΑ ΥΠΟΛΗΨΙΣ. *CRI.* You are then a downright Sceptic. But, Sceptic as you are, you own it, probable there is a God, certain that the Chriſtian Religion is uſeful, poſſible it may be true, certain

certain that if it be, the Minute Philoſophers are in a bad way. This being the Caſe, how can it be queſtioned what Courſe a wiſe Man ſhould take? Whether the Principles of Chriſtians or Infidels are trueſt may be made a Queſtion, but which are ſafeſt can be none. Certainly if you doubt of all Opinions you muſt doubt of your own: and then, for ought you know, the Chriſtian may be true. The more doubt, the more room there is for Faith, a Sceptic of all Men having the leaſt Right to demand Evidence. But, whatever Uncertainty there may be in other Points, thus much is certain: either there is or is not a God: there is or is not a Revelation: Man either is or is not an Agent: the Soul is or is not Immortal. If the Negatives are not ſure, the Affirmatives are poſſible. If the Negatives are improbable, the Affimatives are probable. In Proportion, as any of your ingenious Men finds himſelf unable to prove any one of theſe Negatives, he hath grounds to ſuſpect he may be miſtaken. A Minute Philoſopher, therefore, that would act a conſiſtent part, ſhould have the Diffidence, the Modeſty, and the Timidity, as well as the Doubts, of a Sceptic; not pretend to an Ocean of Light, and then lead us to an Abyſs of Darkneſs. If I have any Notion of Ridicule, this

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DIAL. VII. is moſt ridiculous. But your ridiculing what, for ought you know, may be true, I can make no Senſe of it. It is neither acting as a wiſe Man with regard to your own Intereſt, nor as a good Man with regard to that of your Country.

XXVIII. *Tully* ſaith ſomewhere, *aut undique religionem tolle aut uſquequaque conſerva*: Either let us have no Religion at all, or let it be reſpected. If any ſingle Inſtance can be ſhewn of a People that ever proſpered without ſome Religion, or if there be any Religion better than the Chriſtian, propoſe it in the grand Aſſembly of the Nation to change our Conſtitution, and either live without Religion, or introduce that new Religion. A Sceptic, as well as other Men, is Member of a Community, and can diſtinguiſh between Good and Evil, Natural or Political. Be this then his Guide as a Patriot, though he be no Chriſtian. Or, if he doth not pretend even to this Diſcernment, let him not pretend to correct or alter what he knows nothing of: Neither let him that only doubts behave as if he could demonſtrate. *Timagoras* is wont to ſay, I find my Country in poſſeſſion of certain Tenets: they appear to have an uſeful Tendency, and, as ſuch, are encouraged by the Le-

giſlature: they make a main part of our Conſtitution: I do not find theſe Innovators can diſprove them, or ſubſtitute things more uſeful and certain in their ſtead: out of Regard therefore to the Good of Mankind, and the Laws of my Country, I ſhall aquieſce in them. I do not ſay *Timagoras* is a Chriſtian, but I reckon him a Patriot. Not to inquire in a Point of ſo great Concern is Folly, but it is ſtill a higher degree of Folly to condemn without inquiring. *Lyſicles* ſeemed heartily tired of this Converſation. It is now late, ſaid he to *Alciphron*, and all things are ready for our Departure. Every one hath his own way of thinking: and it is as impoſſible for me to adopt another Man's, as to make his Complexion and Features mine. *Alciphron* pleaded that, having complied with *Euphranor*'s Conditions, they were now at Liberty: And *Euphranor* anſwered that, all he deſired having been to know their Tenets, he had nothing further to pretend. DIAL. VII.

XXIX. The Philoſophers being gone, I obſerved to *Crito* how unaccontable it was, that Men ſo eaſy to confute ſhould yet be ſo difficult to convince. This, ſaid *Crito*, is accounted for by *Ariſtotle*, who tells us that Arguments have not an Effect

DIAL. VII. fect on all Men, but only on them whoſe Minds are prepared by Education and Cuſtom, as Land is for Seed *. Make a Point never ſo clear, it is great odds, that a Man, whoſe Habits and the Bent of whoſe Mind lie a contray way, ſhall be unable to comprehend it. So weak a thing is Reaſon in Competition with Inclination. I replied, this Anſwer might hold with reſpect to other Perſons and other Times: but when the Queſtion was of inquiſitive Men, in an Age wherein Reaſon was ſo much cultivated, and Thinking ſo much in Vogue, it did not ſeem ſatisfactory. I have known it remarked, ſaid *Crito*, by a Man of much Obſervation, that in the preſent Age Thinking is more talk'd of but leſs practiſed than in ancient times: and that ſince the Revival of Learning, Men have read much and wrote much, but thought little: inſomuch that with us to think cloſely and juſtly is the leaſt part of a learned Man, and none at all of a polite Man. The Free-thinkers, it muſt be owned, make great Pretenſions to Thinking, and yet they ſhew but little Exactneſs in it. A lively Man, and what the World calls a Man of Senſe are often deſtitute of this Talent; which is not a mere Gift

* Ethic. ad Nicom. l. 10. c. 9.

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of Nature, but must be improved and perfected, by much Attention and Exercise on very different Subjects; a thing of more Pains and Time than the hasty Men of Parts in our Age care to take. Such were the Sentiments of a judicious Friend of mine: And, if you are not already sufficiently convinced of these Truths, you need only cast an Eye on the dark and confused, but nevertheless admired, Writers of this famous Sect: And then you will be able to judge, whether those who are led by Men of such wrong Heads can have very good ones of their own. Such, for instance, was *Spinosa*, the great Leader of our modern Infidels, in whom are to be found many Schemes and Notions much admired and followed of late Years: Such as undermining Religion, under the Pretence of vindicating and explaining it: The maintaining it not necessary to believe in Christ according to the Flesh: The persuading Men that Miracles are to be understood only in a spiritual and allegorical Sense: That Vice is not so bad a thing as we are apt to think: That Men are mere Machines impelled by fatal Necessity. I have heard, said I, *Spinosa* represented as a Man of close Argument and Demonstration. He did, replied *Crito*, demonstrate: but it

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was

DIAL. VII. was after such a manner, as any one may demonstrate any thing. Allow a Man the Privilege to make his own Definitions of common Words, and it will be no hard matter for him to infer Conclusions, which in one Sense shall be true and in another false, at once seeming Paradoxes and manifest Truisms. For Example, let but *Spinosa* define natural Right to be natural Power, and he will easily demonstrate, that *whatever a Man can do* he hath a right to do *. Nothing can be plainer than the Folly of this Proceeding: but our Pretenders to the *lumen siccum* are so passionately prejudiced against Religion, as to swallow the grossest Nonsense and Sophistry of weak and wicked Writers for Demonstration.

XXX. And so great a Noise do these Men make, with their thinking, reasoning, and demonstrating, as to prejudice some well-meaning Persons against all Use and Improvement of Reason. Honest *Demea*, having seen a Neighbour of his ruined by the Vices of a Free-thinking Son, contracted such a Prejudice against Thinking, that he would not suffer his own to read *Euclid*, being told it might teach him to think; till a Friend convinced him the

* Tractat. Politic. c. 2.

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epidemical Distemper was not Thinking, but only the Want and Affectation of it. I know an eminent Free-thinker, who never goes to bed, without a Gallon of Wine in his Belly, and is sure to repleniſh before the Fumes are off his Brain, by which means he has not had one sober Thought theſe seven Years; another, that would not for the World loſe the Privilege and Reputation of Free-thinking, who games all Night, and lies in Bed all Day: And as for the Outside or Appearance of Thought in that meagre Minute Philoſopher *Ibycus*, it is an Effect, not of thinking, but of carking, cheating, and writing in an Office. Strange, said he, that ſuch Men ſhould ſet up for Free-thinkers! But it is yet more ſtrange that other Men ſhould be out of Conceit with Thinking and Reaſoning, for the ſake of ſuch Pretenders. I anſwered, that ſome good Men conceived an Oppoſition between Reaſon and Religion, Faith and Knowledge, Nature and Grace; and that, conſequently, the way to promote Religion was to quench the Light of Nature, and diſcourage all rational Inquiry. DIAL. VII.

XXXI. How right the Intentions of theſe Men may be, replied *Crito*, I ſhall not ſay; but ſurely their Notions are very

DIAL. VII. wrong. Can any thing be more dishonourable to Religion, than the representing it as an unreasonable, unnatural, ignorant Institution? God is the Father of all Lights, whether natural or revealed. Natural Concupiscence is one thing, and the Light of Nature another. You cannot therefore argue from the former against the latter: Neither can you from Science falsly so called, against real Knowledge. Whatever therefore is said of the one in Holy Scripture is not to be interpreted of the other. I insisted that Humane Learning in the Hands of Divines, had, from time to time, created great Disputes and Divisions in the Church. As abstracted Metaphysics, replied *Crito*, have always had a Tendency to produce Disputes among Christians, as well as other Men; so it should seem that genuine Truth and Knowledge would allay this Humour, which makes Men sacrifice the undisputed Duties of Peace and Charity to disputable Notions. After all, said I, whatever may be said for Reason, it is plain, the Sceptics and Infidels of the Age are not to be cured by it. I will not dispute this Point, said *Crito*: in order to cure a Distemper, you should consider what produced it. Had Men reasoned themselves into a wrong Opinion, one might hope to reason them out of it. But

this is not the Caſe; the Infidelity of moſt Minute Philoſophers ſeeming an Effect of very different Motives from Thought and Reaſon. Little Incidents, Vanity, Diſguſt, Humour, Inclination, without the leaſt Aſſiſtance from Reaſon, are often known to make Infidels. Where the general Tendency of a Doctrine is diſagreeable, the Mind is prepared to reliſh and improve every thing that with the leaſt Pretence ſeems to make againſt it. Hence the coarſe Manners of a Country Curate, the polite Manners of a Chaplain, the Wit of a Minute Philoſopher, a Jeſt, a Song, a Tale can ſerve inſtead of a Reaſon for Infidelity. *Bupalus* preferred a Rake in the Church, and then made uſe of him as an Argument againſt it. Vice, Indolence, Faction, and Faſhion, produce Minute Philoſophers, and mere Petulancy not a few. Who then can expect a thing ſo irrational and capricious ſhould yield to Reaſon? It may, nevertheleſs, be worth while to argue againſt ſuch Men, and expoſe their Fallacies, if not for their own ſake, yet for the ſake of others; as it may leſſen their Credit, and prevent the growth of their Sect, by removing a Prejudice in their Favour, which ſometimes inclines others as well as themſelves to think they have made a Monopoly of Humane Reaſon. DIAL. VII.

DIAL. VII.

XXXII. The moſt general Pretext which looks like Reaſon, is taken from the Variety of Opinions about Religion. This is a reſting Stone to a lazy and ſuperficial Mind. But one of more Spirit and a juſter way of Thinking, makes it a Step whence he looks about, and proceeds to examine, and compare the differing Inſtitutions of Religion. He will obſerve, which of theſe is the moſt ſublime and rational in its Doctrines, moſt venerable in its Myſteries, moſt uſeful in its Precepts, moſt decent in its Worſhip? Which createth the nobleſt Hopes, and moſt worthy Views? He will conſider their Riſe and Progreſs: which oweth leaſt to Humane Arts or Arms? Which flatters the Senſes and groſs Inclinations of Men? Which adorns and improves the moſt excellent Part of our Nature? Which hath been propagated in the moſt wonderful Manner? Which hath ſurmounted the greateſt Difficulties, or ſhew'd the moſt diſintereſted Zeal and Sincerity in its Profeſſors? He will inquire, which beſt accords with Nature and Hiſtory? He will conſider, what ſavours of the World, and what looks like Wiſdom from above? He will be careful to ſeparate Humane Allay from that which is Divine; and upon the whole, form his Judgment like a reaſonable Free-thinker.

But

But instead of taking such a rational Course, one of those hasty Sceptics shall conclude without demurring, there is no Wisdom in Politics, no Honesty in Dealings, no Knowledge in Philosophy, no Truth in Religion: And all by one and the same sort of Inference, from the numerous Examples of Folly, Knavery, Ignorance, and Error, which are to be met with in the World. But, as those who are unknowing in every thing else, imagine themselves sharpsighted in Religion, this learned Sophism is oftenest levelled against Christianity. DIAL. VII.

XXXIII. In my Opinion, he that would convince an Infidel who can be brought to Reason, ought in the first place clearly to convince him of the Being of a God, it seeming to me, that any Man who is really a Theist, cannot be an Enemy to the Christian Religion: And that the Ignorance or Disbelief of this fundamental Point, is that which at bottom constitutes the Minute Philosopher. I imagine they, who are acquainted with the great Authors in the Minute Philosophy, need not be told of this. The Being of a God is capable of clear Proof, and a proper Object of Humane Reason: whereas the Mysteries of his Nature, and indeed whatever there is of

DIAL. VII. Myſtery in Religion, to endeavour to explain and prove by Reaſon, is a vain Attempt. It is ſufficient if we can ſhew there is nothing abſurd or repugnant in our Belief of thoſe Points, and, inſtead of framing Hypotheſes to explain them, we uſe our Reaſon only for anſwering the Objections, brought againſt them. But on all Occaſions, we ought to diſtinguiſh the ſerious, modeſt, ingenuous Man of Senſe, who hath Scruples about Religion, and behaves like a prudent Man in doubt, from the Minute Philoſophers, thoſe profane and conceited Men, who muſt needs proſelyte others to their own Doubts. When one of this Stamp preſents himſelf, we ſhould conſider what Species he is of: Whether a firſt or a ſecond-hand Philoſopher, a Libertine, Scorner, or Sceptic? Each Character requiring a peculiar Treatment. Some Men are too ignorant to be humble, without which there can be no Docility: But though a Man muſt in ſome Degree have Thought, and conſidered to be capable of being convinced, yet it is poſſible the moſt ignorant may be laugh'd out of his Opinions. I knew a Woman of Senſe reduce two Minute Philoſophers, who had long been a Nuſance to the Neighbourhood, by taking her Cue from their predominant Affectations.

tions. The one ſet up for the moſt in- DIAL.
credulous Man upon Earth, the other for VII.
the moſt unbounded Freedom. She ob-
ſerved to the firſt, that he who had Credulity ſufficient to truſt the moſt valuable Things, his Life and Fortune, to his Apothecary and Lawyer, ridiculouſly affected the Character of Incredulous, by refuſing to truſt his Soul, a Thing in his own Account but a mere Trifle, to his Pariſh-Prieſt. The other, being what you call a Beau, ſhe made ſenſible how abſolute a Slave he was in point of Dreſs, to him the moſt important thing in the World, while he was earneſtly contending for a Liberty of Thinking, with which he never troubled his Head: and how much more it concerned and became him to aſſert an Independency on Faſhion, and obtain Scope for his Genius, where it was beſt qualified to exert it ſelf. The Minute Philoſophers at firſt hand are very few, and conſidered in themſelves, of ſmall Conſequence: But their Followers, who pin their Faith upon them, are numerous, and not leſs confident than credulous; there being ſomething in the Air and Manner of theſe ſecond-hand Philoſophers, very apt to diſconcert a Man of Gravity and Argument, and much more difficult to be born than the Weight of their Objections.

DIAL. VII. XXXIV. *Crito* having made an end, *Euphranor* declared it to be his Opinion: that it would much conduce to the public Benefit, if, inſtead of diſcouraging Free-thinking, there was erected in the midſt of this free Country a Dianoetic Academy, or Seminary for Free-thinkers, provided with retired Chambers, and Galleries, and ſhady Walks and Groves: where, after ſeven Years ſpent in Silence and Meditation, a Man might commence a genuine Free-thinker, and from that time forward, have Licence to think what he pleaſed, and a Badge to diſtinguiſh him from Counterfeits. In good earneſt, ſaid *Crito*, I imagine that Thinking is the great *Deſideratum* of the preſent Age: and that the real Cauſe of whatever is amiſs, may juſtly be reckoned the general Neglect of Education, in thoſe who need it moſt, the People of Faſhion. What can be expected where thoſe who have the moſt Influence, have the leaſt Senſe, and thoſe who are ſure to be followed, ſet the worſt Example? Where Youth ſo uneducated are yet ſo forward? Where Modeſty is eſteemed Puſillanimity, and a Deference to Years, Knowledge, Religion, Laws, want of Senſe and Spirit? Such untimely Growth of Genius would not have been valued or encouraged by the

the wiſe Men of Antiquity; whoſe Sentiments on this Point are ſo ill ſuited to the Genius of our Times, that it is to be feared modern Ears could not bear them. But, however ridiculous ſuch Maxims might ſeem to our *Britiſh* Youth, who are ſo capable and ſo forward to try Experiments and mend the Conſtitution of their Country: I believe it will be admitted by Men of Senſe, that if the Governing part of Mankind would in theſe Days, for Experiment's ſake, conſider themſelves in that old *Homerical* Light as Paſtors of the People; whoſe Duty it was to improve their Flock, they would ſoon find that this is to be done by an Education very different from the Modern, and otherguefs Maxims than thoſe of the Minute Philoſophy. If our Youth were really inured to Thought and Reflection, and an Acquaintance with the excellent Writers of Antiquity: we ſhould ſoon ſee that licentious Humour, vulgarly called *Free-thinking*, baniſhed from the Preſence of Gentlemen, together with Ignorance and ill Taſte: which as they are inſeparable from Vice, ſo Men follow Vice for the ſake of Pleaſure, and fly from Virtue through an Abhorrence of Pain. Their Minds therefore betimes ſhould be formed and accuſtomed

DIAL. VII.

to

DIAL. VII. to receive Pleaſure and Pain from proper Objects, or, which is the ſame thing, to have their Inclinations and Averſions rightly placed. Καλῶς χαίρειν ἢ μισεῖν. This, according to *Plato* and *Ariſtotle*, was the ὀρθὴ παιδεία, the right Education *. And thoſe who, in their own Minds, their Health, or their Fortunes, feel the curſed Effects of a wrong one, would do well to conſider, they cannot better make amends for what was amiſs in themſelves, than by preventing the ſame in their Poſterity. While *Crito* was ſaying this, Company came in, which put an End to our Converſation.

* Plato in Protag. & Ariſtot. ethic. ad Nicom. l. 2. c. 2. & l. 10. c. 9.

July 67

AN

AN

ESSAY

TOWARDS A

NEW THEORY

OF

VISION.

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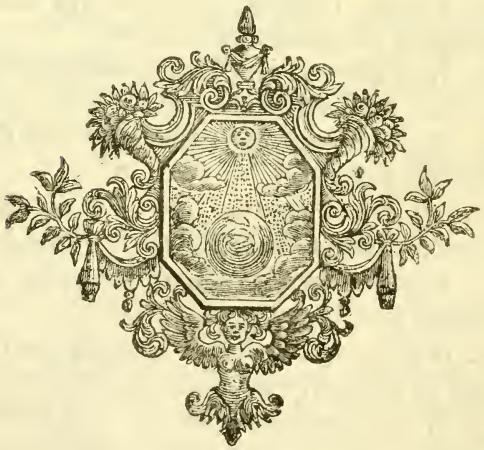


AN

ESSAY

TOWARDS

A New Theory of Vision.

I. MY Design is to shew the Manner, wherein we perceive by Sight the Distance, Magnitude, and Situation of Objects. Also to consider the Difference there is betwixt the Ideas of Sight and Touch, and whether there be any Idea common to both Senses.

II. It is, I think, agreed by all, that Distance, of it self and immediately, cannot be seen. For Distance being a Line directed end-wise to the Eye, it projects only one Point in the Fund of the Eye, which Point remains invariably the same,

whether the Diſtance be longer or ſhorter.

III. I find it alſo acknowledged, that the Eſtimate we make of the Diſtance of Objects conſiderably remote, is rather an Act of Judgment grounded on Experience, than of Senſe. For Example, when I perceive a great Number of intermediate Objects, ſuch as Houſes, Fields, Rivers, and the like, which I have experienced to take up a conſiderable Space, I thence form a Judgment or Concluſion, that the Object I ſee beyond them is at a great Diſtance. Again, when an Object appears faint and ſmall, which at a near Diſtance I have experienced to make a vigorous and large Appearance, I inſtantly conclude it to be far off: And this, 'tis evident is the reſult of Experience; without which, from the Faintneſs and Littleneſs I ſhould not have inferred any thing concerning the Diſtance of Objects.

IV. But when an Object is placed at ſo near a Diſtance, as that the Interval between the Eyes bears any ſenſible Proportion to it, the Opinion of ſpeculative Men is, that the two Optic Axes (the Fancy that we ſee only with one Eye at once being exploded) concurring at the Object do there

there make an Angle, by means of which, according as it is greater or leſſer, the Object is perceived to be nearer or farther off *.

V. Betwixt which, and the foregoing Manner of eſtimating Diſtance, there is this remarkable Difference: That, whereas there was no apparent, neceſſary Connexion between ſmall Diſtance and a large and ſtrong Appearance, or between great Diſtance and a little and faint Appearance, there appears a very neceſſary Connexion between an obtuſe Angle and near Diſtance, and an acute Angle and farther Diſtance. It does not in the leaſt depend upon Experience, but may be evidently known by any one before he had experienced it, that the nearer the Concurrence of the Optic Axes, the greater the Angle, and the remoter their Concurrence is, the leſſer will be the Angle comprehended by them.

VI. There is another way mentioned by Optic Writers, whereby they will have us judge of thoſe Diſtances, in reſpect of which the Breadth of the Pupil hath any ſenſible Bigneſs: And that is the greater or leſſer Divergency of the

* *See what* Deſcartes *and others have written on this Subject.*

Rays, which iſſuing from the viſible Point, do fall on the Pupil: That Point being judged neareſt, which is ſeen by moſt diverging Rays: and that remoter which is ſeen by leſs diverging Rays: And ſo on, the apparent Diſtance ſtill increaſing, as the Divergency of the Rays decreaſes, till at length it becomes infinite, when the Rays that fall on the Pupil are to Senſe Parallel. And after this manner it is ſaid we perceive Diſtance when we look only with one Eye.

VII. In this Caſe alſo, it is plain we are not beholding to Experience: It being a certain, neceſſary Truth, that the nearer the direct Rays falling on the Eye approach to a Paralleliſm, the farther off is the Point of their Interſection, or the viſible Point from whence they flow.

VIII. Now though the Accounts here given of perceivving near Diſtance by Sight are received for true, and accordingly made uſe of in determining the apparent Places of Objects, they do nevertheleſs ſeem very unſatisfactory: And that for theſe following Reaſons.

IX. It is evident that when the Mind perceives any Idea, not immediately and

and of it ſelf, it muſt be by the means of ſome other Idea: Thus, for Inſtance, the Paſſions which are in the Mind of another, are of themſelves to me inviſible. I may nevertheleſs perceive them by Sight, though not immediately, yet by means of the Colours they produce in the Countenance. We often ſee Shame or Fear in the Looks of a Man, by perceiving the Changes of his Countenance to Red or Pale.

X. Moreover it is evident that no Idea, which is not it ſelf perceived, can be the means of perceiving any other Idea. If I do not perceive the Redneſs or Paleneſs of a Man's Face themſelves, it is impoſſible I ſhould perceive by them the Paſſions which are in his Mind.

XI. Now from SECT. II. it is plain that Diſtance is in its own Nature imperceptible, and yet it is perceived by Sight. It remains, therefore, that it be brought into View by means of ſome other Idea, that is it ſelf immediately perceived in the Act of Viſion.

XII. But thoſe Lines and Angles, by means whereof ſome Men pretend to explain the Perception of Diſtance, are themſelves not at all perceived, nor are they

in truth ever thought of by thoſe unskilful in Optics. I appeal to any ones Experience, whether upon Sight of an Object, he computes its Diſtance by the Bigneſs of the Angle, made by the meeting of the two Optic Axes? Or whether he ever thinks of the greater or leſſer Divergency of the Rays, which arrive from any Point to his Pupil? Every one is himſelf the beſt Judge of what he perceives, and what not. In vain ſhall any Man tell me, that I perceive certain Lines and Angles which introduce into my Mind the various Ideas of Diſtance, ſo long as I my ſelf am conſcious of no ſuch thing.

XIII. Since therefore thoſe Angles and Lines are not themſelves perceived by Sight, it follows from SECT. X. that the Mind doth not by them judge of the Diſtance of Objects.

XIV. The Truth of this Aſſertion will be, yet, farther evident to any one that conſiders thoſe Lines and Angles have no real Exiſtence in Nature, being only an Hypotheſis framed by the Mathematicians, and by them introduced into Optics, that they might treat of that Science in a Geometrical way.

XV. The

XV. The laſt Reaſon I ſhall give for rejecting that Doctrine, is, that though we ſhould grant the real Exiſtence of thoſe Optic Angles, *&c.* and that it was poſſible for the Mind to perceive them; yet theſe Principles would not be found ſufficient to explain the *Phænomena* of Diſtance, as ſhall be ſhewn hereafter.

XVI. Now, it being already ſhewn that Diſtance is ſuggeſted to the Mind, by the Mediation of ſome other Idea which is it ſelf perceived in the Act of Seeing; it remains that we inquire what Ideas, or Senſations there be that attend Viſion, unto which we may ſuppoſe the Ideas of Diſtance are connected, and by which they are introduced into the Mind. And *Firſt*, It is certain by Experience, that when we look at a near Object with both Eyes, according as it approaches, or recedes from us, we alter the Diſpoſition of our Eyes, by leſſening or widening the Interval between the Pupils. This Diſpoſition or Turn of the Eyes is attended with a Senſation, which ſeems to me to be that which in this Caſe brings the Idea of greater or leſſer Diſtance into the Mind.

XVII. Not that there is any natural or neceſſary Connexion between the Senſation

ſation we perceive by the Turn of the Eyes, and greater or leſſer Diſtance: but becauſe the Mind has by conſtant Experience found the different Senſations correſponding to the different Diſpoſitions of the Eyes, to be attended each with a different Degree of Diſtance in the Object; There has grown an Habitual or Cuſtomary Connexion between thoſe two ſorts of Ideas, ſo that the Mind no ſooner perceives the Senſation ariſing from the different Turn it gives the Eyes, in order to bring the Pupils nearer, or farther aſunder, but it withal perceives the different Idea of Diſtance which was wont to be connected with that Senſation: Juſt as upon hearing a certain Sound, the Idea is immediately ſuggeſted to the Underſtanding, which Cuſtom had united with it.

XVIII. Nor do I ſee, how I can eaſily be miſtaken in this Matter. I know evidently that Diſtance is not perceived of it ſelf. That by Conſequence, it muſt be perceived by means of ſome other Idea which is immediately perceived, and varies with the different Degrees of Diſtance. I know alſo that the Senſation ariſing from the Turn of the Eyes is of it ſelf immediately perceived, and various Degrees thereof are connected with different Diſtances,

ſtances, which never fail to accompany them into my Mind, when I view an Object diſtinctly with both Eyes, whoſe Diſtance is ſo ſmall that in reſpect of it the Interval between the Eyes has any conſiderable Magnitude.

XIX. I know it is a received Opinion, that by altering the Diſpoſition of the Eyes, the Mind perceives whether the Angle of the Optic Axes, or the lateral Angles comprehended between the Interval of the Eyes and the Optic Axes, are made greater or leſſer; and that accordingly by a kind of Natural Geometry, it judges the Point of their Interſection to be nearer, or farther off. But that this is not true, I am convinced by my own Experience, ſince I am not conſcious, that I make any ſuch uſe of the Perception I have by the Turn of my Eyes. And for me to make thoſe Judgments, and draw thoſe Concluſions from it, without knowing that I do ſo, ſeems altogether incomprehenſible.

XX. From all which it follows, that the Judgment we make of the Diſtance of an Object, viewed with both Eyes, is entirely the Reſult of Experience. If we had not conſtantly found certain Senſations ariſing from the various Diſpoſition of the

the Eyes, attended with certain Degrees of Diſtance, we ſhould never make thoſe ſudden Judgments from them, concerning the Diſtance of Objects: no more than we would pretend to judge of a Man's Thoughts by his pronouncing Words we had never heard before.

XXI. *Secondly*, An Object placed at a certain Diſtance from the Eye, to which the Breadth of the Pupil bears a conſiderable Proportion, being made to approach, is ſeen more confuſedly: And the nearer it is brought, the more confuſed Appearance it makes. And this being found conſtantly to be ſo, there ariſeth in the Mind an Habitual Connexion between the ſeveral Degrees of Confuſion and Diſtance; the greater Confuſion ſtill implying the leſſer Diſtance, and the leſſer Confuſion, the greater Diſtance of the Object.

XXII. This confuſed Appearance of the Object doth therefore ſeem to be the Medium, whereby the Mind judgeth of Diſtance in thoſe Caſes, wherein the moſt approved Writers of Optics will have it judge by the different Divergency, with which the Rays flowing from the Radiating Point fall on the Pupil. No Man, I believe, will pretend to ſee or feel thoſe ima-

imaginary Angles, that the Rays are ſuppoſed to form according to their various Inclinations on his Eye. But he cannot chooſe Seeing whether the Object appear more or leſs confuſed. It is therefore a manifeſt Conſequence from what hath been demonſtrated, that inſtead of the greater, or leſſer Divergency of the Rays, the Mind makes uſe of the greater or leſſer Confuſedneſs of the Appearance, thereby to determine the apparent Place of an Object.

XXIII. Nor doth it avail to ſay, there is not any neceſſary Connexion between confuſed Viſion and Diſtance, great or ſmall. For I ask any Man, what neceſſary Connexion he ſees between the Redneſs of a Bluſh and Shame? And yet no ſooner ſhall he behold that Colour to ariſe in the Face of another, but it brings into his Mind the Idea of that Paſſion which hath been obſerved to accompany it.

XXIV. What ſeems to have miſled the Writers of Optics in this Matter is, that they imagine Men judge of Diſtance, as they do of a Concluſion in Mathematics; betwixt which and the Premiſes it is indeed abſolutely requiſite there be an apparent, neceſſary Connexion: But it is far otherwiſe, in the ſudden Judgments Men

make of Diſtance. We are not to think, that Brutes and Children, or even grown reaſonable Men, whenever they perceive an Object to approach, or depart from them, do it by virtue of Geometry and Demonſtration.

XXV. That one Idea may ſuggeſt another to the Mind, it will ſuffice that they have been obſerved to go together, without any Demonſtration of the Neceſſity of their Coexiſtence, or without ſo much as knowing what it is that makes them ſo to coexiſt. Of this there are innumerable Inſtances, of which no one can be ignorant.

XXVI. Thus, greater Confuſion having been conſtantly attended with nearer Diſtance, no ſooner is the former Idea perceived, but it ſuggeſts the latter to our Thoughts. And if it had been the ordinary Courſe of Nature, that the farther off an Object were placed, the more confuſed it ſhould appear, it is certain, the very ſame Perception, that now makes us think an Object approaches, would then have made us to imagine it went farther off. That Perception, abſtracting from Cuſtom and Experience, being equally fitted to produce the Idea of great Diſtance, or ſmall Diſtance, or no Diſtance at all.

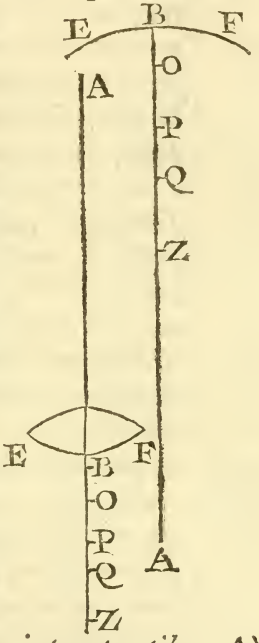
XXVII. *Thirdly*, An Object being placed at the Distance above specified, and brought nearer to the Eye, we may nevertheless prevent, at least for some time, the Appearances growing more confused, by straining the Eye. In which Case, that Sensation supplies the place of confused Vision, in aiding the Mind to judge of the Distance of the Object; it being esteemed so much the nearer, by how much the Effort or Straining of the Eye in order to distinct Vision is greater.

XXVIII. I have here set down those Sensations or Ideas, that seem to be the constant and general Occasions of introducing into the Mind the different Ideas of near Distance. It is true in most Cases, that divers other Circumstances contribute to frame our Idea of Distance, to wit, the particular Number, Size, Kind, *&c.* of the things seen. Concerning which, as well as all other the forementioned Occasions which suggest Distance, I shall only observe, they have none of them, in their own Nature, any Relation or Connexion with it: Nor is it possible, they should ever signify the various Degrees thereof, otherwise than as by Experience they have been found to be connected with them.

XXIX. I ſhall proceed upon theſe Principles to account for a Phænomenon, which has hitherto ſtrangely puzzled the Writers of Optics, and is ſo far from being accounted for by any of their Theories of Viſion, that it is, by their own Confeſſion, plainly repugnant to them: And of Conſequence, if nothing elſe could be objected, were alone ſufficient to bring their Credit in Queſtion. The whole Difficulty I ſhall lay before you in the Words of the learned Dr. *Barrow*, with which he concludes his Optic Lectures.

> *Hæc ſunt, quæ circa partem Opticæ præcipue Mathematicam dicenda mihi ſuggeſſit meditatio. Circa reliquas, (quæ φυσικώτερα ſunt, adeoque ſæpiuſcule pro certis principiis plauſibiles conjecturas venditare neceſſum habent) nihil fere quicquam admodum veriſimile ſuccurrit, a pervulgatis (ab iis, inquam, quæ* Keplerus, Scheinerus, Carteſius, *& poſt illos alii tradiderunt) alienum aut diverſum. Atqui tacere malo, quam toties oblatam cramben reponere. Proinde receptui cano; nec ita tamen ut prorſus diſcedam anteaquam improbam quandam difficultatem (pro ſinceritate quam & vobis & veritati debeo minime diſſimulandam) in medium protulero, quæ*

quæ doctrinæ noſtræ, hactenus inculcatæ, ſe objicit adverſam, ab ea ſaltem nullam admittit ſolutionem. Illa, breviter, talis eſt: Lenti vel Speculo cavo EBF *exponatur punctum viſibile* A, *ita Diſtans ut Radii ex* A *manantes ex inflexione verſus axem* A B *cogantur. Sitque radiationis Limes (ſeu puncti* A *imago, qualem ſupra paſſim ſtatuimus) punctum* Z. *Inter hoc autem & inflectentis verticem* B *uſpiam poſitus concipiatur Oculus. Quæri jam poteſt ubi loci debeat punctum* A *apparere? Retrorſum ad punctum* Z *videri non fert Natura (cum omnis impreſſio ſenſum afficiens proveniat a partibus* A) *ac experientia reclamat. Noſtris autem e placitis conſequi videtur, ipſum ad partes anticas apparens ab intervallo longiſſime diſſito, (quod & maximum ſenſibile quodvis Intervallum quodammodo exſuperet) apparere. Cum enim quo Radiis minus divergentibus attingitur Objectum, eo (ſecluſis utique*



prænotionibus & præjudiciis) longius abeſſe ſentiatur; et quod Parellelos ad Oculum Radios projicit, remotiſſime poſitum æſtimetur. Exigere Ratio videtur, ut quod convergentibus radiis apprehenditur, adhuc magis, ſi fieri poſſet, quoad apparentiam elongetur. Quin & circa Caſum hunc generatim inquiri poſſit, quidnam omnino ſit, quod apparentem puncti A *locum determinet, faciatque quod conſtanti ratione nunc propius, nunc remotius appareat? Cui itidem dubio, nihil quicquam ex hactenus dictorum* Analogia, *reſponderi poſſe videtur, niſi debere punctum* A *perpetuo longiſſime ſemotum videri. Verum experientia ſecus atteſtatur, illud pro diverſa Oculi inter puncta* B, Z, *poſitione varie diſtans; nunquam fere (ſi unquam) longinquius ipſo* A *libere ſpectato, ſubinde vero multo propinquius adparere; quinimo, quo oculum appellentes radii magis convergunt eo ſpeciem Objecti propius accedere. Nempe, ſi puncto* B *admoveatur* Oculus, *ſuo (ad lentem) fere nativo in loco conſpicitur punctum* A *(vel æque diſtans, ad* Speculum;) *ad* O *reductus oculus ejuſce ſpeciem appropinquantem cernit; ad* P *adhuc vicinius ipſum exiſtimat; ac ita ſenſim, donec alicubi tandem, velut*

ad

ad Q, *conſtituto oculo objectum ſumme propinquum apparens, in meram confuſionem incipiat evaneſcere. Quæ ſane cuncta rationibus atque decretis noſtris repugnare videntur, aut cum iis ſaltem parum amice conſpirant. Neque noſtram tantum ſententiam pulſat hoc experimentum; at ex æquo cæteras quas norim omnes, veterem imprimis ac vulgatam noſtræ præ reliquis affinem ita convellere videtur, ut ejus vi coactus doctiſſimus* A. Tacquetus *iſti principio* (*cui pene ſoli totam inædificaverat* Catoptricam *ſuam*) *ceu infido ac inconſtanti renunciarit, adeoque ſuam ipſe doctrinam labefactarit; id tamen, opinor, minime facturus, ſi rem totam inſpexiſſet penitius, atque difficultatis fundum attigiſſet. Apud me vero non ita pollet hæc, nec eouſque præpollebit ulla difficultas, ut abiis, quæ manifeſte rationi conſentanea video, diſcedam; præſertim quum ut hic accidit, ejuſmodi difficultas in ſingularis cujuſpiam casûs diſparitate fundetur. Nimirum in præſente caſu peculiare quiddam, naturæ ſubtilitati involutum, delitescit, ægre fortaſſis, niſi perfectius explorato videndi modo, detegendum. Circa quod nil, fateor, hactenus excogitare potui, quod adblan-*

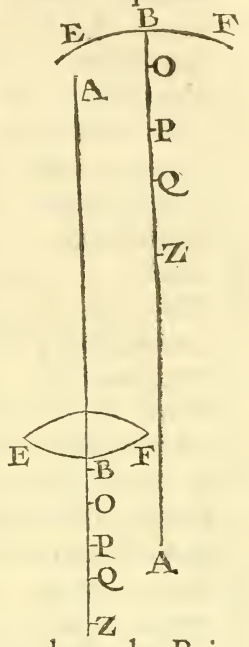
diretur animo meo, nedum plane ſatisfaceret. Vobis itaque nodum hunc, utinam feliciore conatu, reſolvendum committo.

In Engliſh as follows.

'I have here delivered what my 'Thoughts have ſuggeſted to me, con- 'cerning that part of Optics which is 'more properly Mathematical. As for 'the other Parts of that Science (which 'being rather Phyſical, do conſequently 'abound with plauſible Conjectures in- 'ſtead of certain Principles) there has in 'them ſcarce any thing occur'd to my 'Obſervation, different from what has 'been already ſaid by *Kepler*, *Scheinerus*, '*Deſcartes*, and others. And methinks, 'I had better ſay nothing at all, than 'repeat that which has been ſo often 'ſaid by others. I think it therefore 'high time to take my leave of this Sub- 'ject: But before I quit it for good and 'all, the fair and ingenuous Dealing that 'I owe both to You and to Truth, ob- 'ligeth me to acquaint you with a cer- 'tain untoward Difficulty, which ſeems 'directly oppoſite to the Doctrine I have 'been hitherto inculcating, at leaſt, ad- 'mits of no Solution from it. In ſhort

'it

‘ it is this. Before the double Convex Glaſs or Concave Speculum EBF, let the Point A be placed, at ſuch a Diſtance that the Rays proceeding from A, after Refraction or Reflexion, be brought to Unite ſomewhere in the Ax AB. And ſuppoſe the Point of Union (*i. e.* the Image of the Point A, as hath been already ſet forth) to be Z; between which and B, the Vertex of the Glaſs or Speculum, conceive the Eye to be any where placed.



‘ The Queſtion now is, where the Point A ought to appear? Experience ſhews that it doth not appear behind at the Point Z, and it were contrary to Nature that it ſhould; ſince all the Impreſſion which affects the Senſe comes from towards A. But from our Tenets it ſhould ſeem to follow that it would appear before the Eye at a vaſt Diſtance off, ſo great as ſhould in ſome Sort ſurpaſs all ſenſible Diſtance. For ſince

‘ if

'if we exclude all Anticipations and Prejudices, every Object appears by so much the farther off, by how much the Rays it sends to the Eye are less diverging. And that Object is thought to be most remote, from which Palallel Rays proceed unto the Eye. Reason would make one think, that Object should appear, at yet a greater Distance, which is seen by converging Rays. Moreover it may in general be asked concerning this Case, what it is that determines the apparent Place of the Point A, and maketh it to appear after a constant manner, sometimes nearer, at other times farther off? To which Doubt, I see nothing that can be answered agreeable to the Principles we have laid down except only that the Point A ought always to appear extremely remote. But on the contrary, we are assured by Experience that the Point A appears variously distant, according to the different Situations of the Eye between the Point B and Z. And that it doth never (if at all) seem farther off, than it would if it were beheld by the naked Eye, but on the contrary, it doth sometimes appear much nearer. Nay, it is even certain, that by how much the Rays falling on the Eye do more

'more converge, by ſo much the nearer
'doth the Object ſeem to approach. For
'the Eye being placed cloſe to the Point
'B, the Object A appears nearly in its
'own natural Place, if the Point B is
'taken in the Glaſs, or at the ſame Di-
'ſtance, if in the Speculum. The Eye
'being brought back to O, the Object
'ſeems to draw near: and being come
'to P it beholds it ſtill nearer. And ſo on
'by little and little, till at length the Eye
'being placed ſomewhere, ſuppoſe at Q,
'the Object appearing extremely near,
'begins to vaniſh into mere Confuſion.
'All which doth ſeem repugnant to our
'Principles, at leaſt, not rightly to agree
'with them. Nor is our Tenet alone
'ſtruck at by this Experiment, but like-
'wiſe all others that ever came to my
'Knowledge are, every whit as much,
'endangered by it. The ancient one
'eſpecially (which is moſt commonly re-
'ceived, and comes neareſt to mine)
'ſeems to be ſo effectually overthrown
'thereby, that the moſt learned *Tacquet*
'has been forced to reject that Principle,
'as falſe and uncertain, on which alone he
'had built almoſt his whole Catoptrics;
'and conſequently by taking away the
'Foundation, hath himſelf pulled down
'the Superſtructure he had raiſed on it.

'Which

'Which, nevertheleſs, I do not believe he 'would have done, had he but conſidered 'the whole Matter more thoroughly, and 'examined the Difficulty to the Bottom. 'But as for me, neither this, nor any 'other Difficulty ſhall have ſo great an 'Influence on me, as to make me re-'nounce that which I know to be ma-'nifeſtly agreeable to Reaſon: Eſpecially 'when, as it here falls out, the Difficulty 'is founded in the peculiar Nature of a 'certain odd and particular Caſe. For in 'the preſent Caſe ſomething peculiar lies 'hid, which being involved in the Sub-'tilty of Nature will, perhaps, hardly 'be diſcovered till ſuch time, as the 'Manner of Viſion is more perfectly 'made known. Concerning which, I 'muſt own, I have hitherto been able 'to find out nothing that has the leaſt 'ſhew of Probability, not to mention 'Certainty. I ſhall, therefore, leave this 'Knot to be untied by you, wiſhing 'you may have better Succeſs in it than I 'have had.

XXX. The ancient and received Principle, which Dr. *Barrow* here mentions as the main Foundation of *Tacquet*'s Catoptrics, is that *every viſible Point ſeen by Reflexion from a Speculum, ſhall appear placed*

placed at the Interſection of the reflected Ray, and the Perpendicular of Incidence. Which Interſection in the preſent Caſe, happening to be behind the Eye, it greatly ſhakes the Authority of that Principle, whereon the aforementioned Author proceeds throughout his whole Catoptrics, in determining the apparent Place of Objects ſeen by Reflexion from any kind of Speculum.

XXXI. Let us now ſee how this Phænomenon agrees with our Tenets. The Eye the nearer it is placed to the Point B in the foregoing Figures, the more diſtinct is the Appearance of the Object; but as it recedes to O, the Appearance grows more confuſed; and at P it ſees the Object yet more confuſed; and ſo on till the Eye being brought back to Z, ſees the Object in the greateſt Confuſion of all. Wherefore by Sect. XXI. the Object ſhould ſeem to approach the Eye gradually, as it recedes from the Point B, that is at O it ſhould (in Conſequence of the Principle I have laid down in the aforeſaid Section) ſeem nearer than it did at B, and at P nearer than at O, and at Q nearer than at P; and ſo on, till it quite vaniſhes at Z. Which is the very matter of Fact, as any one that

that pleaſes may eaſily ſatisfy himſelf by Experiment.

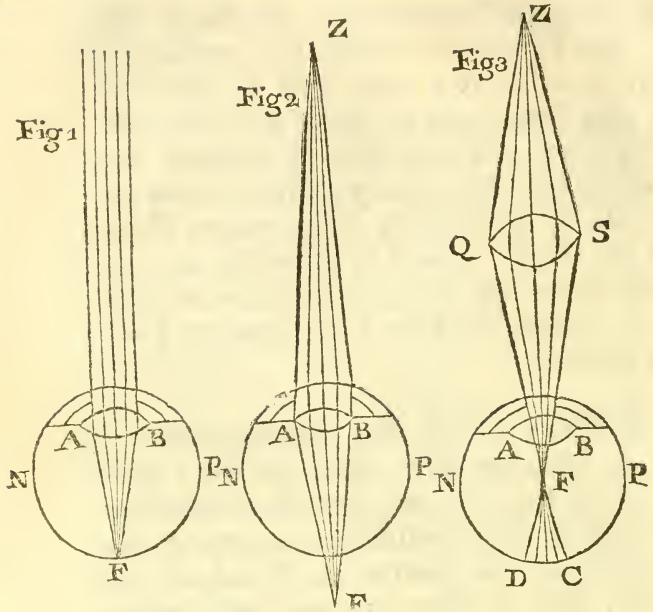
XXXII. This Caſe is much the ſame, as if we ſhould ſuppoſe an *Engliſhman* to meet a Foreigner, who uſed the ſame Words with the *Engliſh*, but in a direct contrary Signification. The *Engliſhman* would not fail to make a wrong Judgment, of the Ideas annexed to thoſe Sounds, in the Mind of him that uſed them. Juſt ſo, in the preſent Caſe the Object ſpeaks (if I may ſo ſay) with Words that the Eye is well acquainted with, that is, Confuſions of Appearance; but whereas heretofore the greater Confuſions were always wont to ſignify nearer Diſtances, they have in this Caſe a direct, contrary Signification, being connected with the greater Diſtances. Whence it follows, that the Eye muſt unavoidably be miſtaken, ſince it will take the Confuſions in the Senſe it has been uſed to, which is directly oppoſed to the True.

XXXIII. This Phænomenon as it entirely ſubverts the Opinion of thoſe, who will have us judge of Diſtance by Lines and Angles, on which Suppoſition it is altogether inexplicable, ſo it ſeems to me

me no ſmall Confirmation, of the Truth of that Principle whereby it is explained. But in order to a more full Explication of this Point, and to ſhew how far the Hypotheſis of the Mind's judging by the various Divergency of Rays, may be of uſe in determining the apparent Place of an Object, it will be neceſſary to premiſe ſome few things, which are already well known to thoſe who have any Skill in Dioptrics.

XXXIV. *Firſt*, Any radiating Point is then diſtinctly ſeen when the Rays proceeding from it are, by the Refractive Power of the Cryſtalline, accurately reunited in the Retina or Fund of the Eye: But if they are reunited, either before they arrive at the Retina, or after they have paſt it, then there is confuſed Viſion.

XXXV. *Secondly*, Suppoſe in the adjacent Figures N P repreſent an Eye duly framed, and retaining its natural Figure. In Fig. 1. the Rays falling nearly Parallel on the Eye, are by the Cryſtalline A B refracted, ſo as their Focus or Point of Union F falls exactly on the Retina: But if the Rays fall ſenſibly diverging on the Eye, as in Fig. 2. then their Focus falls beyond the Retina:



Retina: Or if the Rays are made to converge by the Lens Q S, before they come at the Eye, as in Fig. 3. their Focus F will fall before the Retina. In which two laſt Caſes, it is evident from the foregoing Section, that the Appearance of the Point Z is confuſed. And by how much the greater is the Convergency, or Divergency of the Rays falling on the Pupil, by ſo much the farther will the Point of their Reunion be from the Retina, either before or behind it, and conſequently the Point Z will appear, by ſo much the more confuſed.

fused. And this, by the bye, may shew us the Difference between confused, and faint Vision. Confused Vision is, when the Rays proceeding from each distinct Point of the Object are not accurately recollected in one corresponding Point on the Retina, but take up some Space thereon: So that Rays from different Points become mixed, and confused together. This is opposed to a distinct Vision, and attends near Objects. Faint Vision is, when by reason of the Distance of the Object or Grossness of the interjacent Medium few Rays arrive from the Object to the Eye. This is opposed to vigorous or clear Vision, and attends remote Objects. But to return.

XXXVI. The Eye, or (to speak truly) the Mind perceiving only the Confusion it self, without ever considering the Cause from which it proceeds, doth constantly annex the same Degree of Distance to the same Degree of Confusion. Whether that Confusion be occasioned by converging, or by diverging Rays, it matters not. Whence it follows, that the Eye viewing the Object Z through the Glass Q S (which by Refraction causeth the Rays Z Q, Z S, *&c.* to converge) should judge it to be at such a Nearness, at which if it were placed, it

would radiate on the Eye with Rays diverging to that Degree, as would produce the ſame Confuſion, which is now produced by converging Rays, *i. e.* would cover a Portion of the Retina equal to D C. *vid.* Fig. 3. *ſupra.* But then this muſt be underſtood (to uſe Dr. *Barrow*'s Phraſe) *ſecluſis prænotionibus & præjudiciis*, in caſe we abſtract from all other Circumſtances of Viſion, ſuch as the Figure, Size, Faintneſs, *&c.* of the viſible Objects; all which do ordinarily concur to form our Idea of Diſtance, the Mind having by frequent Experience obſerved their ſeveral Sorts or Degrees, to be connected with various Diſtances.

XXXVII. It plainly follows from what hath been ſaid, that a Perſon perfectly Purblind (*i. e.* that could not ſee an Object diſtinctly, but when placed cloſe to his Eye) would not make the ſame wrong Judgment that others do, in the foremention'd Caſe. For, to him, greater Confuſions conſtantly ſuggeſting greater Diſtances, he muſt, as he recedes from the Glaſs, and the Object grows more Confuſed, judge it to be at a farther Diſtance, contrary to what they do, who have had the Perception of the Objects growing more

more confuſed, connected with the Idea of Approach.

XXXVIII. Hence alſo it doth appear, there may be good uſe of Computation by Lines and Angles in Optics; not that the Mind judgeth of Diſtance immediately by them, but becauſe it judgeth by ſomewhat which is connected with them, and to the Determination whereof they may be ſubſervient. Thus the Mind judging of the Diſtance of an Object, by the Confuſedneſs of its Appearance, and this Confuſedneſs being greater or leſſer to the naked Eye, according as the Object is ſeen by Rays more or leſs diverging, it follows, that a Man may make uſe of the Divergency of the Rays in computing the apparent Diſtance, though not for its own ſake, yet on account of the Confuſion with which it is connected. But, ſo it is, the Confuſion it ſelf is entirely neglected by Mathematicians, as having no neceſſary Relation with Diſtance, ſuch as the greater or leſſer Angles of Divergency are conceived to have. And theſe (eſpecially for that they fall under Mathematical Computation) are alone regarded, in determining the apparent Places of Objects, as though they were the ſole and immediate Cauſe of the Judgments the Mind makes of Diſtance.

Whereas, in truth, they ſhould not at all be regarded in themſelves, or any otherwiſe, than as they are ſuppoſed to be the Cauſe of confuſed Viſion.

XXXIX. The not conſidering of this has been a fundamental and perplexing Overſight. For Proof whereof, we need go no farther than the Caſe before us. It having been obſerved, that the moſt diverging Rays brought into the Mind the Idea of neareſt Diſtance, and that ſtill, as the Divergency decreaſed, the Diſtance increaſed: and it being thought, the Connexion between the various Degrees of Divergency and Diſtance, was immediate; this naturally leads one to conclude, from an ill grounded Analogy, that converging Rays ſhall make an Object appear at an immenſe Diſtance: And that, as the Convergency increaſes, the Diſtance (if it were poſſible) ſhould do ſo likewiſe. That this was the Cauſe of Dr. *Barrow*'s Miſtake, is evident from his own Words which we have quoted. Whereas had the learned Doctor obſerved, that diverging and converging Rays, how oppoſite ſoever they may ſeem, do nevertheleſs agree in producing the ſame Effect, to wit, Confuſedneſs of Viſion, greater Degrees whereof are produced indifferently, either as the Divergency or

Convergency of the Rays increaſeth. And that it is by this Effect, which is the ſame in both, that either the Divergency or Convergency is perceived by the Eye; I ſay, had he but conſider'd this, it is certain he would have made a quite contrary Judgment, and rightly concluded, that thoſe Rays which fall on the Eye with greater Degrees of Convergency ſhould make the Object from whence they proceed, appear by ſo much the nearer. But it is plain, it was impoſſible for any Man to attain to a right Notion of this Matter, ſo long as he had regard only to Lines and Angles, and did not apprehend the true Nature of Viſion, and how far it was of Mathematical Conſideration.

XL. Before we diſmiſs this Subject, it is fit we take notice of a Query relating thereto, propoſed by the ingenious Mr. *Molyneux*, in his Treatiſe of Dioptrics *, where ſpeaking of this Difficulty, he has theſe Words: 'And ſo he (*i. e.* Dr. '*Barrow*) leaves this Difficulty to the 'Solution of others, which I (after ſo 'great an Example) ſhall do like-'wiſe; but with the Reſolution of the 'ſame admirable Author of not quitting 'the evident Doctrine which we have

* Par. I. Prop. 31. Sect. 9.

'before laid down, for determining the 'Locus Objecti, on account of being preſs'd 'by one Difficulty, which ſeems inexpli- 'cable till a more intimate Knowledge of 'the Viſive Faculty be obtained by Mor- 'tals. In the mean time, I propoſe it to 'the Conſideration of the Ingenious, Whe- 'ther the *Locus Apparens* of an Object 'placed as in this 9th Section, be not as 'much before the Eye, as the diſtinct 'Baſe is behind the Eye?' To which Query we may venture to anſwer in the Negative. For in the preſent Caſe, the Rule for determining the Diſtance of the diſtinct Baſe, or reſpective Focus from the Glaſs is this: *As the Difference between the Diſtance of the Object and Focus is to the Focus or Focal Length, ſo the Diſtance of the Object from the Glaſs is to the Diſtance of the reſpective Focus or diſtinct Baſe from the Glaſs* *. Let us now ſuppoſe the Object to be placed at the Diſtance of the Focal Length, and one half of the Focal Length from the Glaſs, and the Eye cloſe to the Glaſs, hence it will follow by the Rule, that the Diſtance of the diſtinct Baſe behind the Eye is double the true Diſtance of the Object before the Eye. If therefore Mr. *Molyneux*'s Conjecture held good, it wou'd follow that the Eye ſhould ſee the Object, twice as far off as it

* Molyneux Dioptr. Par. I. Prop. 5.

it really is; and in other Caſes at three or four times its due Diſtance, or more. But this manifeſtly contradicts Experience, the Object never appearing, at fartheſt, beyond its due Diſtance. What ever therefore is built on this Suppoſition (*vid. Corol.* 1. *Prop.* 57, *ibid.*) comes to the Ground along with it.

XLI. From what hath been premis'd, it is a manifeſt Conſequence, that a Man born blind, being made to ſee, would, at firſt, have no Idea of Diſtance by Sight; The Sun and Stars, the remoteſt Objects as well as the nearer would all ſeem to be in his Eye, or rather in his Mind. The Objects intromitted by Sight, would ſeem to him (as in truth they are) no other than a new Set of Thoughts or Senſations, each whereof is as near to him, as the Perceptions of Pain or Pleaſure, or the moſt inward Paſſions of his Soul. For our judging Objects perceiv'd by Sight to be at any Diſtance, or without the Mind, is (*vid.* SECT. XXVIII.) intirely the Effect of Experience, which one in thoſe Circumſtances could not yet have attained to.

XLII. It is indeed otherwiſe upon the common Suppoſition, that Men judge of Diſtance by the Angle of the Optic Axes,

juſt as one in the Dark, or a Blind-man by the Angle comprehended by two Sticks, one whereof he held in each Hand. For if this were true, it would follow that one blind from his Birth being made to ſee, ſhould ſtand in need of no new Experience, in order to perceive Diſtance by Sight. But that this is falſe, has, I think, been ſufficiently demonſtrated.

XLIII. And perhaps upon a ſtrict Inquiry, we ſhall not find that even thoſe, who from their Birth have grown up in a continu'd Habit of Seeing, are irrecoverably prejudiced on the other ſide, to wit, in thinking what they ſee to be at a Diſtance from them. For at this time it ſeems agreed on all hands, by thoſe who have had any Thoughts of that Matter, that Colours, which are the proper and immediate Object of Sight, are not without the Mind. But then it will be ſaid, by Sight we have alſo the Ideas of Extenſion, and Figure, and Motion; all which may well be thought without, and at ſome Diſtance from the Mind, though Colour ſhould not. In anſwer to this, I appeal to any Man's Experience, whether the viſible Extenſion of any Object doth not appear as near to him, as the Colour of that Object; Nay, whether they do not both

ſeem

ſeem to be in the very ſame Place. Is not the Extenſion we ſee coloured, and is it poſſible for us, ſo much as in Thought, to ſeparate and abſtract Colour from Extenſion? Now, where the Extenſion is, there ſurely is the Figure, and there the Motion too. I ſpeak of thoſe which are perceived by Sight.

XLIV. But for a fuller Explication of this Point, and to ſhew that the immediate Objects of Sight are not ſo much as the Ideas or Reſemblances of things placed at a Diſtance, it is requiſite that we look nearer into the Matter, and carefully obſerve what is meant in common Diſcourſe, when one ſays, that which he ſees is at a Diſtance from him. Suppoſe, for Example, that looking at the Moon I ſhould ſay it were fifty or ſixty Semidiameters of the Earth diſtant from me. Let us ſee what Moon this is ſpoken of: It is plain it cannot be the viſible Moon, or any thing like the viſible Moon, or that which I ſee, which is only a round, luminous Plain, of about thirty viſible Points in Diameter. For in caſe I am carried from the Place where I ſtand directly towards the Moon, it is manifeſt the Object varies, ſtill as I go on; and by the time that I am advanced fifty or ſixty Semidiameters of the Earth,

Earth, I ſhall be ſo far from being near a ſmall, round, luminous Flat, that I ſhall perceive nothing like it; this Object having long ſince diſappeared, and if I would recover it, it muſt be by going back to the Earth from whence I ſet out. Again, ſuppoſe I perceive by Sight the faint and obſcure Idea of ſomething, which I doubt whether it be a Man, or a Tree, or a Tower, but judge it to be at the Diſtance of about a Mile. It is plain I cannot mean, that what I ſee is a Mile off, or that it is the Image or Likeneſs of any thing which is a Mile off, ſince that every Step I take towards it, the Appearance alters, and from being obſcure, ſmall, and faint, grows clear, large, and vigorous. And when I come to the Mile's end, that which I ſaw firſt is quite loſt, neither do I find any thing in the likeneſs of it.

XLV. In theſe and the like Inſtances, the Truth of the Matter ſtands thus: Having of a long time experienced certain Ideas, perceivable by Touch, as Diſtance, tangible Figure, and Solidity, to have been connected with certain Ideas of Sight, I do upon perceiving theſe Ideas of Sight, forthwith conclude what Tangible Ideas are, by the wonted ordinary courſe of Nature, like to follow. Looking at an Object I per-

perceive a certain visible Figure and Colour, with some degree of Faintness and other Circumstances, which from what I have formerly observed, determine me to think, that if I advance forward so many Paces or Miles, I shall be affected with such and such Ideas of Touch: So that in truth and strictness of Speech, I neither see Distance it self, nor any thing that I take to be at a Distance. I say, neither Distance, nor things placed at a Distance are themselves, or their Ideas, truly perceived by Sight. This I am persuaded of, as to what concerns my self: and I believe whoever will look narrowly into his own Thoughts, and examine what he means by saying, he sees this or that thing at a Distance, will agree with me, that what he sees only suggests to his Understanding, that after having passed a certain Distance, to be measured by the Motion of his Body, which is perceivable by Touch, he shall come to perceive such and such tangible Ideas which have been usually connected with such and such visible Ideas. But that one might be deceived by these Suggestions of Sense, and that there is no necessary Connexion between visible and tangible Ideas suggested by them, we need go no farther than the next Looking-glass or Picture to be convinced. Note, that

that when I ſpeak of Tangible Ideas, I take the word Idea for any the immediate Object of Senſe, or Underſtanding, in which large Signification it is commonly uſed by the Moderns.

XLVI. From what we have ſhewn it is a manifeſt Conſequence, that the Ideas of Space, Outneſs, and Things placed at a Diſtance, are not, ſtrictly ſpeaking, the Object of Sight; they are not otherwiſe perceived by the Eye than by the Ear. Sitting in my Study I hear a Coach drive along the Street; I look through the Caſement and ſee it; I walk out and enter into it; thus, common Speech would incline one to think, I heard, ſaw, and touch'd the ſame thing, to wit, the Coach. It is nevertheleſs certain, the Ideas intromitted by each Senſe are widely different, and diſtinct from each other; but having been obſerved conſtantly to go together, they are ſpoken of as one and the ſame thing. By the Variation of the Noiſe I perceive the different Diſtances of the Coach, and know that it approaches before I look out. Thus by the Ear I perceive Diſtance, juſt after the ſame manner as I do by the Eye.

XLVII.

XLVII. I do not nevertheleſs ſay, I hear Diſtance in like manner as I ſay that I ſee it, the Ideas perceived by Hearing not being ſo apt to be confounded with the Ideas of Touch, as thoſe of Sight are. So likewiſe a Man is eaſily convinced that Bodies and external Things are not properly the Object of Hearing; but only Sounds, by the Mediation whereof the Idea of this or that Body, or Diſtance is ſuggeſted to his Thoughts. But then one is with more Difficulty brought to diſcern the Difference there is betwixt the Ideas of Sight and Touch: Though it be certain, a Man no more ſees and feels the ſame thing, than he hears and feels the ſame thing.

XLVIII. One Reaſon of which ſeems to be this. It is thought a great Abſurdity to imagine, that one and the ſame thing ſhould have any more than one Extenſion, and one Figure. But the Extenſion and Figure of a Body, being let into the Mind two ways, and that indifferently, either by Sight or Touch, it ſeems to follow that we ſee the ſame Extenſion and the ſame Figure which we feel.

XLIX. But if we take a cloſe and accurate View of Things, it muſt be acknow-

knowledged that we never ſee and feel one and the ſame Object. That which is ſeen is one thing, and that which is felt is another. If the viſible Figure and Extenſion be not the ſame with the tangible Figure and Extenſion, we are not to infer that one and the ſame thing has divers Extenſions. The true Conſequence is, that the Objects of Sight and Touch are two diſtinct things. It may perhaps require ſome Thought rightly to conceive this Diſtinction. And the Difficulty ſeems not a little increaſed, becauſe the Combination of Viſible Ideas hath conſtantly the ſame Name, as the Combination of Tangible Ideas wherewith it is connected: Which doth of Neceſſity ariſe from the uſe and end of Language.

L. In order therefore to treat accurately and unconfuſedly of Viſion, we muſt bear in mind, that there are two Sorts of Objects apprehended by the Eye, the one primarily and immediately, the other ſecondarily and by Intervention of the former. Thoſe of the firſt ſort neither are, nor appear to be without the Mind, or at any Diſtance off: they may indeed grow greater, or ſmaller, more confuſed, or more clear, or more faint, but they do not, cannot approach or recede from us. Whenever we

we ſay an Object is at a Diſtance, whenever we ſay it draws near, or goes farther off, we muſt always mean it of the latter ſort, which properly belong to the Touch, and are not ſo truly perceived, as ſuggeſted by the Eye in like manner as Thoughts by the Ear.

LI. No ſooner do we hear the Words of a familiar Language pronounced in our Ears, but the Ideas correſponding thereto preſent themſelves to our Minds: in the very ſame Inſtant the Sound and the Meaning enter the Underſtanding: So cloſely are they united, that it is not in our Power to keep out the one, except we exclude the other alſo. We even act in all reſpects as if we heard the very Thoughts themſelves. So likewiſe the ſecondary Objects, or thoſe which are only ſuggeſted by Sight, do often more ſtrongly affect us, and are more regarded than the proper Objects of that Senſe; along with which they enter into the Mind, and with which they have a far more ſtrict Connexion, than Ideas have with Words. Hence it is, we find it ſo difficult to diſcriminate between the immediate and mediate Objects of Sight, and are ſo prone to attribute to the former, what belongs only to the latter. They are, as it were, moſt cloſely twiſted, blended,

blended, and incorporated together. And the Prejudice is confirmed and riveted in our Thoughts by a long Tract of Time, by the uſe of Language, and want of Reflexion. However, I believe any one that ſhall attentively conſider what we have already ſaid, and ſhall ſay upon this Subject before we have done, (eſpecially if he purſue it in his own Thoughts) may be able to deliver himſelf from that Prejudice. Sure I am it is worth ſome Attention, to whoever would underſtand the true Nature of Viſion.

LII. I have now done with Diſtance, and proceed to ſhew how it is, that we perceive by Sight the Magnitude of Objects. It is the Opinion of ſome that we do it by Angles, or by Angles in conjunction with Diſtance: but neither Angles, nor Diſtance being perceivable by Sight, and the things we ſee being in truth at no Diſtance from us, it follows that as we have ſhewn Lines and Angles not to be the Medium, the Mind makes uſe of in apprehending the apparent Place, ſo neither are they the Medium whereby it apprehends the apparent Magnitude of Objects.

LIII. It is well known that the ſame Extenſion at a near Diſtance ſhall ſubtend

tend a greater Angle, and at a farther Diſtance, a leſſer Angle. And by this Principle (we are told) the Mind eſtimates the Magnitude of an Object comparing the Angle under which it is ſeen with its Diſtance, and thence inferring the Magnitude thereof. What inclines Men to this Miſtake (beſide the Humour of making one ſee by Geometry) is, that the ſame Perceptions or Ideas which ſuggeſt Diſtance, do alſo ſuggeſt Magnitude. But if we examine it, we ſhall find they ſuggeſt the latter, as immediately as the former. I ſay, they do not firſt ſuggeſt Diſtance, and then leave it to the Judgment to uſe that as a Medium, whereby to collect the Magnitude; but they have as cloſe, and immediate a Connexion with the Magnitude, as with the Diſtance; and ſuggeſt Magnitude as independently of Diſtance, as they do Diſtance independently of Magnitude. All which will be evident to whoever conſiders what hath been already ſaid, and what follows.

LIV. It hath been ſhewn, there are two ſorts of Objects apprehended by Sight; each whereof hath its diſtinct Magnitude, or Extenſion. The one, properly Tangible, *i. e.* to be perceived and meaſured by Touch, and not immediately falling

under the Senſe of Seeing: The other, properly and immediately viſible, by Mediation of which the former is brought in view. Each of theſe Magnitudes are greater or leſſer, according as they contain in them more or fewer Points, they being made up of Points or Minimums. For, whatever may be ſaid of Extenſion in Abſtract, it is certain ſenſible Extenſion is not infinitely Diviſible. There is a *Minimum Tangible*, and a *Minimum Viſible*, beyond which Senſe cannot perceive. This every ones Experience will inform him.

LV. The Magnitude of the Object which exiſts without the Mind, and is at a Diſtance, continues always invariably the ſame: But the viſible Object ſtill changing as you approach to, or recede from the Tangible Object, it hath no fixed and determinate Greatneſs. Whenever therefore, we ſpeak of the Magnitude of any thing, for Inſtance a Tree or a Houſe, we muſt mean the Tangible Magnitude, otherwiſe there can be nothing ſteady and free from Ambiguity ſpoken of it. But though the Tangible and Viſible Magnitude in truth belong to two diſtinct Objects: I ſhall nevertheleſs (eſpecially ſince thoſe Objects are called by the ſame Name, and are obſerved to coexiſt) to

to avoid Tediouſneſs and Singularity of Speech, ſometimes ſpeak of them, as belonging to one and the ſame thing.

LVI. Now in order to diſcover by what means, the Magnitude of Tangible Objects is perceived by Sight; I need only reflect on what paſſes in my own Mind, and obſerve what thoſe things be, which introduce the Ideas of greater or leſſer into my Thoughts, when I look on any Object. And theſe I find to be, Firſt, the Magnitude or Extenſion of the Viſible Object, which being immediately perceived by Sight, is connected with that other which is Tangible, and placed at a Diſtance. Secondly, The Confuſion or Diſtinctneſs. And Thirdly, The Vigorouſneſs or Faintneſs of the aforeſaid viſible Appearance. *Cæteris paribus*, by how much the greater or leſſer, the Viſible Object is, by ſo much the greater or leſſer, do I conclude the Tangible Object to be. But, be the Idea immediately perceived by Sight never ſo large, yet if it be withal confuſed, I judge the Magnitude of the thing to be but ſmall. If it be diſtinct and clear, I judge it greater. And if it be faint, I apprehend it to be yet greater. What is here meant, by Confuſion and Faintneſs, hath been explained in Sect. XXXV.

LVII. Moreover the Judgments we make of Greatneſs do, in like manner as thoſe of Diſtance, depend on the Diſpoſition of the Eye, alſo on the Figure, Number, and Situation of Objects and other Circumſtances that have been obſerved to attend great or ſmall Tangible Magnitudes. Thus, for Inſtance, the very ſame Quantity of Viſible Extenſion, which in the Figure of a Tower, doth ſuggeſt the Idea of great Magnitude, ſhall, in the Figure of a Man ſuggeſt the Idea of much ſmaller Magnitude. That this is owing to the Experience we have had of the uſual Bigneſs of a Tower and a Man, no one, I ſuppoſe, need be told.

LVIII. It is alſo evident, that Confuſion or Faintneſs, have no more a neceſſary Connexion with little or great Magnitude, than they have with little or great Diſtance. As they ſuggeſt the latter, ſo they ſuggeſt the former to our Minds. And by Conſequence, if it were not for Experience, we ſhould no more judge a faint or confuſed Appearance to be connected with great or little Magnitude, than we ſhould that it was connected with great or little Diſtance.

LIX. Nor

LIX. Nor will it be found, that great or ſmall viſible Magnitude hath any neceſſary Relation to great or ſmall Tangible Magnitude: So that the one may certainly be infer'd from the other. But, before we come to to the Proof of this, it is fit we conſider the Difference there is betwixt the Extenſion and Figure which is the proper Object of Touch, and that other which is termed Viſible; and how the former is principally, though not immediately taken notice of, when we look at any Object. This has been before mentioned, but we ſhall here inquire into the Cauſe thereof. We regard the Objects that environ us, in proportion as they are adapted to benefit or injure our own Bodies, and thereby produce in our Minds the Senſations of Pleaſure or Pain. Now Bodies operating on our Organs, by an immediate Application, and the Hurt or Advantage ariſing there-from, depending altogether on the Tangible, and not at all on the Viſible, Qualities of any Object: This is a plain Reaſon, why thoſe ſhould be regarded by us much more than theſe: and for this End, the Viſive Senſe ſeems to have been beſtowed on Animals, to wit, that by the Perception of Viſible Ideas (which in themſelves are not capable of affecting, or any wiſe altering the

Frame of their Bodies) they may be able to foreſee (from the Experience they have had, what Tangible Ideas are connected with ſuch, and ſuch Viſible Ideas) the Damage or Benefit which is like to enſue, upon the Application of their own Bodies to this or that Body which is at a Diſtance. Which Foreſight, how neceſſary it is to the Preſervation of an Animal, every ones Experience can inform him. Hence it is that, when we look at an Object, the Tangible Figure and Extenſion thereof are principally attended to; whilſt there is ſmall heed taken of the Viſible Figure and Magnitude, which, though more immediately perceived, do leſs concern us, and are not fitted to produce any Alteration in our Bodies.

LX. That the matter of Fact is true, will be evident to any one, who conſiders that a Man placed at ten Foot Diſtance, is thought as great, as if he were placed at the Diſtance only of five Foot: which is true, not with relation to the Viſible, but Tangible Greatneſs of the Object: The Viſible Magnitude being far greater, at one Station, than it is at the other.

LXI. Inches, Feet, *&c.* are ſettled, ſtated Lengths, whereby we meaſure Objects, and

and eſtimate their Magnitude: we ſay, for Example, an Object appears to be ſix Inches or ſix Foot long. Now, that this cannot be meant of viſible Inches, *&c.* is evident, becauſe a viſible Inch is it ſelf no conſtant, determinate Magnitude, and cannot therefore ſerve to mark out, and determine the Magnitude of any other thing. Take an Inch mark'd upon a Ruler: view it, ſucceſſively, at the diſtance of Half a Foot, a Foot, a Foot and a Half, *&c.* from the Eye: at each of which, and at all the intermediate Diſtances, the Inch ſhall have a different viſible Extenſion, *i. e.* there ſhall be more or fewer Points diſcerned in it. Now I ask which of all theſe various Extenſions, is that ſtated, determinate one, that is agreed on, for a common Meaſure of other Magnitudes? No Reaſon can be aſſigned, why we ſhould pitch on one, more than another: And except there be ſome invariable, determinate Extenſion fixed on to be marked by the Word Inch, it is plain, it can be uſed to little purpoſe: and to ſay, a Thing contains this or that Number of Inches, ſhall imply no more than that it is extended, without bringing any particular Idea of that Extenſion into the Mind. Farther, an Inch and a Foot, from different Diſtances, ſhall

both exhibit the ſame viſible Magnitude, and yet at the ſame time, you ſhall ſay, that one ſeems ſeveral times greater than the other. From all which it is manifeſt, that the Judgments we make of the Magnitude of Objects by Sight, are altogether in reference to their Tangible Extenſion. Whenever we ſay an Object is great, or ſmall, of this or that determinate Meaſure, I ſay, it muſt be meant of the Tangible, and not the Viſible Extenſion, which, though immediately perceived, is nevertheleſs little taken notice of.

LXII. Now, that there is no neceſſary Connexion, between theſe two diſtinct Extenſions is evident from hence: Becauſe our Eyes might have been framed in ſuch a manner, as to be able to ſee nothing but what were leſs than the *Minimum Tangibile*. In which Caſe, it is not impoſſible we might have perceived all the immediate Objects of Sight, the very ſame that we do now: But unto thoſe viſible Appearances, there would not be connected thoſe different Tangible Magnitudes, that are now. Which ſhews, the Judgments we make of the Magnitude of Things placed at a diſtance, from the various Greatneſs of the immediate Objects of Sight, do not ariſe from any eſſential or neceſſary

neceſſary, but only a cuſtomary Tye, which has been obſerved between them.

LXIV. Moreover, it is not only certain, that any Idea of Sight might not have been connected with this or that Idea of Touch, which we now obſerve to accompany it: But alſo, that the greater viſible Magnitudes might have been connected with, and introduced into our Minds leſſer Tangible Magnitudes, and the leſſer Viſible Magnitudes greater Tangible Magnitudes. Nay, that it actually is ſo, we have daily Experience; that Object which makes a ſtrong and large Appearance, not ſeeming near ſo great as another, the Viſible Magnitude whereof is much leſs, but more faint, and the Appearance upper, or which is the ſame thing painted lower on the *Retina*, which Faintneſs and Situation ſuggeſt both greater Magnitude and greater Diſtance.

LXIV. From which, and from Sect. LVII. and LVIII. it is manifeſt, that as we do not perceive the Magnitudes of Objects immediately by Sight, ſo neither do we perceive them, by the Mediation of any thing which has a neceſſary Connexion with them. Thoſe Ideas that now ſuggeſt unto us the various Magnitudes

tudes of external Objects, before we touch them, might poſſibly have ſuggeſted no ſuch thing: Or they might have ſignified them, in a direct contrary manner: ſo that the very ſame Ideas, on the Perception whereof we judge an Object to be ſmall, might as well have ſerved to make us conclude it great. Thoſe Ideas being in their own Nature equally fitted to bring into our Minds the Idea of Small or Great, or no Size at all of outward Objects; juſt as the Words of any Language are in their own Nature indifferent to ſignify this or that thing, or nothing at all.

LXV. As we ſee Diſtance, ſo we ſee Magnitude. And we ſee both, in the ſame way that we ſee Shame or Anger in the Looks of a Man. Thoſe Paſſions are themſelves inviſible, they are nevertheleſs let in by the Eye along with Colours and Alterations of Countenance, which are the immediate Object of Viſion: And which ſignify them for no other Reaſon, than barely becauſe they have been obſerved to accompany them. Without which Experience, we ſhould no more have taken Bluſhing for a Sign of Shame, than of Gladneſs.

LXVI. We

LXVI. We are nevertheleſs exceeding prone to imagine thoſe things, which are perceived only by the Mediation of others, to be themſelves the immediate Objects of Sight; or, at leaſt, to have in their own Nature a Fitneſs to be ſuggeſted by them, before ever they had been experienced to coexiſt with them. From which Prejudice every one, perhaps, will not find it eaſy to emancipate himſelf, by any the cleareſt Convictions of Reaſon. And there are ſome Grounds to think, that if there was one only invariable and univerſal Language in the World, and that Men were born with the Faculty of ſpeaking it, it would be the Opinion of many, that the Ideas of other Mens Minds were properly perceived by the Ear, or had at leaſt a neceſſary and inſeparable Tye with the Sounds that were affixed to them. All which ſeems to ariſe from want of a due Application of our diſcerning Faculty, thereby to diſcriminate between the Ideas that are in our Underſtandings, and conſider them apart from each other; which would preſerve us from confounding thoſe that are different, and make us ſee what Ideas do, and what do not include or imply this or that other Idea.

LXVII. There

LXVIII. There is a celebrated Phænomenon, the Solution whereof I ſhall attempt to give, by the Principles that have been laid down, in reference to the manner wherein we apprehend by Sight the Magnitude of Objects. The apparent Magnitude of the Moon when placed in the Horizon, is much greater than when it is in the Meridian. Though the Angle under which the Diameter of the Moon is ſeen, be not obſerved greater in the former Caſe, than in the latter: And the horizontal Moon doth not conſtantly appear of the ſame Bigneſs, but at ſome times ſeemeth far greater than at others.

LXVIII. Now in order to explain the Reaſon of the Moon's appearing greater than ordinary in the Horizon, it muſt be obſerved, that the Particles which compoſe our Atmoſphere intercept the Rays of Light proceeding from any Object to the Eye; and by how much the greater is the Portion of Atmoſphere, interjacent between the Object and the Eye, by ſo much the more are the Rays intercepted; and by conſequence, the Appearance of the Object rendered more faint, every Object appearing more vigorous or more faint, in Proportion as it ſendeth more or fewer Rays into the Eye. Now, between the

the Eye and the Moon, when ſituated in the Horizon, there lies a far greater Quantity of Atmoſphere, than there does when the Moon is in the Meridian. Whence it comes to paſs, that the Appearance of the Horizontal Moon is fainter, and therefore by Sect. LVI. it ſhould be thought bigger in that Situation, than in the Meridian, or in any other Elevation above the Horizon.

LXIX. Farther, the Air being variouſly impregnated, ſometimes more and ſometimes leſs, with Vapours and Exhalations fitted to retund and intercept the Rays of Light, it follows, that the Appearance of the Horizontal Moon hath not always an equal Faintneſs, and by Conſequence, that Luminary, though in the very ſame Situation, is at one time judged greater than at another.

LXX. That we have here given the true Account of the Phænomena of the Horizontal Moon, will, I ſuppoſe, be farther evident to any one from the following Conſiderations. *Firſt*, It is plain, that which in this Caſe ſuggeſts the Idea of greater Magnitude, muſt be ſomething which is it ſelf perceived; for, that which

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is unperceived cannot ſuggeſt to our Perception any other thing. *Secondly*, It muſt be ſomething that does not conſtantly remain the ſame, but is ſubject to ſome Change or Variation, ſince the Appearance of the Horizontal Moon varies, being at one time greater than at another. And yet, *Thirdly*, It cannot be the viſible Figure or Magnitude, ſince that remains the ſame, or is rather leſſer, by how much the Moon is nearer to the Horizon. It remains therefore, that the true Cauſe is that Affection or Alteration of the Viſible Appearance, which proceeds from the greater Paucity of Rays arriving at the Eye, and which I term Faintneſs: Since this anſwers all the forementioned Conditions, and I am not conſcious of any other Perception that doth.

LXXI. Add to this, that in miſty Weather it is a common Obſervation, that the Appearance of the Horizontal Moon is far larger than uſual, which greatly conſpires with, and ſtrengthens our Opinion. Neither would it prove in the leaſt, irreconcilable with what we have ſaid, if the Horizontal Moon ſhould change ſometimes to ſeem enlarged beyond its uſual Extent, even in more ſerene Weather. For we muſt

muſt not only have regard to the Miſt, which happens to be in the place where we ſtand; we ought alſo to take into our Thoughts, the whole Sum of Vapours and Exhalations, which lie betwixt the Eye and the Moon: All which cooperating to render the Appearance of the Moon more faint, and thereby increaſe its Magnitude, it may chance to appear greater than it uſually does, even in the Horizontal Poſition, at a time when, though there be no extraordinary Fog or Hazineſs, juſt in the place where we ſtand; yet, the Air between the Eye and the Moon, taken all together, may be loaded with a greater quantity of interſperſed Vapours and Exhalations, than at other times.

LXXII. It may be objected, that in Conſequence of our Principles, the Interpoſition of a Body in ſome degree Opaque, which may intercept a great Part of the Rays of Light, ſhould render the Appearance of the Moon in the Meridian as large, as when it is viewed in the Horizon. To which I anſwer, it is not Faintneſs any how applied, that ſuggeſts greater Magnitude, there being no neceſſary, but only an experimental Connexion between thoſe two things: It follows, that the

Faintneſs, which enlarges the Appearance, muſt be applied in ſuch Sort, and with ſuch Circumſtances, as have been obſerved to attend the Viſion of great Magnitudes. When from a Diſtance we behold great Objects, the Particles of the intermediate Air and Vapours, which are themſelves unperceivable, do interrupt the Rays of Light, and thereby render the Appearance leſs ſtrong and vivid: now, Faintneſs of Appearance cauſed in this Sort, hath been experienced to coexiſt with great Magnitude. But when it is cauſed by the Interpoſition of an opaque ſenſible Body, this Circumſtance alters the Caſe, ſo that a faint Appearance this way cauſed, doth not ſuggeſt greater Magnitude, becauſe it hath not been experienced to coexiſt with it.

LXXIII. Faintneſs, as well as all other Ideas or Perceptions which ſuggeſt Magnitude or Diſtance, doth it in the ſame way that Words ſuggeſt the Notions to which they are annexed. Now, it is known, a Word pronounced with certain Circumſtances, or in a certain Context with other Words, hath not always the ſame Import and Signification, that it hath when pronounced in ſome other Circumſtances, or different Context of Words. The very ſame Viſible

Visible Appearance as to Faintness and all other Respects, if placed on high, shall not suggest the same Magnitude that it would if it were seen at an equal Distance, on a level with the Eye. The Reason whereof is, that we are rarely accustomed to view Objects at a great Height; our Concerns lie among things situated rather before than above us; and accordingly our Eyes are not placed on the top of our Heads, but in such a Position, as is most convenient for us to see distant Objects standing in our way. And this Situation of them being a Circumstance, which usually attends the Vision of distant Objects, we may from hence account for (what is commonly observed) an Object's appearing of different Magnitude, even with respect to its Horizontal Extension, on the top of a Steeple, for example, an hundred Feet high to one standing below, from what it would if placed at an hundred Feet distance on a level with his Eye. For it hath been shewn, that the Judgment we make on the Magnitude of a thing, depends not on the visible Appearance alone, but also on diverse other Circumstances, any one of which being omitted or varied may suffice to make some Alteration in our Judgment. Hence,

the Circumſtance of viewing a diſtant Object in ſuch a Situation as is uſual, and ſuits with the ordinary Poſture of the Head and Eyes being omitted, and inſtead thereof a different Situation of the Object, which requires a different Poſture of the Head taking place, it is not to be wondered at, if the Magnitude be judged different: but it will be demanded, why an high Object ſhould conſtantly appear leſs than an equidiſtant low Object of the ſame Dimenſions, for ſo it is obſerved to be: it may indeed be granted that the Variation of ſome Circumſtances may vary the Judgment, made on the Magnitude of high Objects, which we are leſs uſed to look at: But it does not hence appear, why they ſhould be judged leſs rather than greater? I anſwer, that in caſe the Magnitude of diſtant Objects was ſuggeſted by the Extent of their viſible Appearance alone, and thought proportional thereto, it is certain they would then be judged much leſs than now they ſeem to be, *Vide* SECT. LXXIX. But, ſeveral Circumſtances concurring to form the Judgment we make on the Magnitude of diſtant Objects, by means of which they appear far larger than others, whoſe viſible Appearance hath an equal or even

greater Extenſion; it follows, that upon the Change or Omiſſion of any of thoſe Circumſtances, which are wont to attend the Viſion of diſtant Objects, and ſo come to influence the Judgments made on their Magnitude, they ſhall proportionably appear leſs than otherwiſe they would. For any of thoſe things that cauſed an Object to be thought greater, than in proportion to its viſible Extenſion, being either omitted or applied without the uſual Circumſtances, the Judgment depends more intirely on the viſible Extenſion, and conſequently the Object muſt be judged leſs. Thus in the preſent Caſe, the Situation of the thing ſeen being different from what it uſually is in thoſe Objects we have occaſion to view, and whoſe Magnitude we obſerve, it follows, that the very ſame Object, being an hundred Feet high, ſhould ſeem leſs than if it was an hundred Feet off on (or nearly on) a level with the Eye. What has been here ſet forth, ſeems to me to have no ſmall ſhare in contributing to magnify the Appearance of the horizontal Moon, and deſerves not to be paſſed over in the Explication of it.

LXXIV. If we attentively conſider the Phænomenon before us, we ſhall find the not diſcerning between the mediate and

immediate Objects of Sight, to be the chief Cauſe of the Difficulty that occurs in the Explication of it. The Magnitude of the viſible Moon, or that which is the proper and immediate Object of Viſion, is no greater when the Moon is in the Horizon, than when it is in the Meridian. How comes it therefore, to ſeem greater in one Situation than the other? What is it can put this Cheat on the Underſtanding? It has no other Perception of the Moon, than what it gets by Sight: And that which is ſeen, is of the ſame Extent, I ſay, the viſible Appearance hath the ſame, or rather a leſs Magnitude when the Moon is viewed in the Horizontal, than when in the Meridional Poſition: And yet it is eſteemed greater in the former than in the latter. Herein conſiſts the difficulty, which doth vaniſh and admit of a moſt eaſy Solution, if we conſider that as the viſible Moon is not greater in the Horizon than in the Meridian, ſo neither is it thought to be ſo. It hath been already ſhewn, that in any act of Viſion, the viſible Object abſolutely, or in it ſelf, is little taken notice of, the Mind ſtill carrying its View from that to ſome tangible Ideas, which have been obſerved to be connected with it, and by that means come to be ſuggeſted by it. So that when a thing is ſaid to ap-

appear great or ſmall, or whatever Eſtimate be made of the Magnitude of any thing, this is meant not of the viſible, but of the tangible Object. This duly conſidered, it will be no hard matter to reconcile the ſeeming Contradiction there is, that the Moon ſhould appear of a different Bigneſs, the viſible Magnitude thereof remaining ſtill the ſame. For by SECT. LVI. the very ſame viſible Extenſion, with a different Faintneſs, ſhall ſuggeſt a different tangible Extenſion. When therefore the horizontal Moon is ſaid to appear greater than the meridional Moon, this muſt be underſtood not of a greater viſible Extenſion, but of a greater tangible or real Extenſion, which by reaſon of the more than ordinary Faintneſs of the viſible Appearance, is ſuggeſted to the Mind along with it.

LXXV. Many Attempts have been made by Learned Men, to account for this Appearance. *Gaſſendus*, *Deſcartes*, *Hobbes*, and ſeveral others, have employed their Thoughts on that Subject; but how fruitleſs and unſatisfactory their Endeavours have been, is ſufficiently ſhewn in *The Philoſophical Tranſactions**, where you may ſee their ſeveral Opinions at large

* Phil. Tranſ. Num. 187. p. 314.

ſet forth and confuted, not without ſome Surprize at the groſs Blunders that ingenious Men have been forced into, by endeavouring to reconcile this Appearance with the ordinary Principles of Optics. Since the Writing of which, there hath been publiſhed in the Tranſactions † another Paper relating to the ſame Affair by the celebrated Dr. *Wallis*, wherein he attempts to account for that Phænomenon, which, though it ſeems not to contain any thing new, or different from what had been ſaid before by others, I ſhall nevertheleſs conſider in this place.

LXXVI. His Opinion, in ſhort, is this; We judge not of the Magnitude of an Object by the viſual Angle alone, but by the viſual Angle in conjunction with the Diſtance. Hence, though the Angle remain the ſame, or even become leſs, yet if withal the Diſtance ſeem to have been increaſed, the Object ſhall appear greater. Now, one way whereby we eſtimate the Diſtance of any thing, is by the Number and Extent of the intermediate Objects: When therefore the Moon is ſeen in the Horizon, the Variety of Fields, Houſes, *&c.* together with the large Proſpect of the wide extended Land or Sea, that lies between the Eye and the utmoſt Limb

† Numb. 187. p. 323.

of

of the Horizon, ſuggeſt unto the Mind the Idea of greater Diſtance, and conſequently magnify the Appearance. And this, according to Dr. *Wallis*, is the true Account of the extraordinary Largeneſs attributed by the Mind to the horizontal Moon, at a time when the Angle ſubtended by its Diameter, is not one Jot greater than it uſed to be.

LXXVII. With reference to this Opinion, not to repeat what hath been already ſaid concerning Diſtance, I ſhall only obſerve, *Firſt*, That if the Proſpect of interjacent Objects be that which ſuggeſts the Idea of farther Diſtance, and this Idea of farther Diſtance be the Cauſe that brings into the Mind the Idea of greater Magnitude, it ſhould hence follow, that if one looked at the horizontal Moon from behind a Wall, it would appear no bigger than ordinary. For in that Caſe, the Wall interpoſing cuts off all that Proſpect of Sea and Land, *&c.* which might otherwiſe increaſe the apparent Diſtance, and thereby the apparent Magnitude of the Moon. Nor will it ſuffice to ſay, the Memory doth even then ſuggeſt all that Extent of Land, *&c.* which lies within the Horizon; which Suggeſtion occaſions a

ſudden Judgment of Senſe, that the Moon is farther off and larger than uſual. For ask any Man, who from ſuch a Station beholding the horizontal Moon, ſhall think her greater than uſual, whether he hath at that time in his Mind any Idea of the intermediate Objects, or long Tract of Land that lies between his Eye and the extreme Edge of the Horizon? And whether it be that Idea which is the Cauſe of his making the aforementioned Judgment? He will, I ſuppoſe, reply in the Negative, and declare the horizontal Moon ſhall appear greater than the meridional, though he never thinks of all or any of thoſe things that lie between him and it. *Secondly*, It ſeems impoſſible by this Hypotheſis, to account for the Moon's appearing in the very ſame Situation, at one time greater than at another; which nevertheleſs has been ſhewn to be very agreeable to the Principles we have laid down, and receives a moſt eaſy and natural Explication from them. For the further clearing up of this Point, it is to be obſerved that what we immediately and properly ſee are only Lights and Colours in ſundry Situations and Shades, and Degrees of Faintneſs and Clearneſs, Confuſion and Diſtinctneſs. All which viſible Objects are only in the Mind,

nor

nor do they ſuggeſt ought external, whether Diſtance or Magnitude, otherwiſe than by habitual Connexion as Words do Things. We are alſo to remark, that, beſide the Straining of the Eyes, and beſide the vivid and faint, the diſtinct and confuſed Appearances (which bearing ſome Proportion to Lines and Angles, have been ſubſtituted inſtead of them, in the foregoing Part of this Treatiſe) there are other means which ſuggeſt both Diſtance and Magnitude; particularly, the Situation of viſible Points, or Objects, as upper or lower; the one ſuggeſting a farther Diſtance and greater Magnitude, the other a nearer Diſtance and leſſer Magnitude: All which is an Effect only of Cuſtom and Experience; there being really nothing intermediate in the Line of Diſtance, between the uppermoſt and lowermoſt, which are both Æquidiſtant, or rather at no Diſtance from the Eye, as there is alſo nothing in Upper or Lower, which by neceſſary Connexion ſhould ſuggeſt greater or leſſer Magnitude. Now, as theſe cuſtomary, experimental means of ſuggeſting Diſtance, do likewiſe ſuggeſt Magnitude, ſo they ſuggeſt the one as immediately as the other. I ſay, they do not (*Vide* SECT. LIII.) firſt ſug-

ſuggeſt Diſtance, and then leave the Mind from thence to infer or compute Magnitude, but ſuggeſt Magnitude as immediately and directly as they ſuggeſt Diſtance.

LXXVIII. This Phænomenon of the horizontal Moon is a clear Inſtance of the inſufficiency of Lines and Angles, for explaining the way wherein the Mind perceives, and eſtimates the Magnitude of outward Objects. There is nevertheleſs a Uſe of Computation by them, in order to determine the apparent Magnitude of things, ſo far as they have a Connexion with, and are proportional to thoſe other Ideas, or Perceptions which are the true and immediate Occaſions that ſuggeſt to the Mind the apparent Magnitude of Things. But this in general may, I think, be obſerved concerning mathematical Computation in Optics: That it can never be very preciſe and exact, ſince the Judgments we make of the Magnitude of external Things do often depend on ſeveral Circumſtances, which are not proportionable to, or capable of being defined by Lines and Angles.

LXXIX.

LXXIX. From what has been ſaid, we may ſafely deduce this Conſequence; to wit, that a Man born blind and made to ſee, would, at firſt opening of his Eyes, make a very different Judgment of the Magnitude of Objects intromitted by them, from what others do. He would not conſider the Ideas of Sight, with reference to, or as having any Connexion with the Ideas of Touch: His View of them being entirely terminated within themſelves, he can no otherwiſe judge them great or ſmall, than as they contain a greater or leſſer Number of viſible Points. Now, it being certain that any viſible Point can cover or exclude from View, only one other viſible Point, it follows, that whatever Object intercepts the View of another, hath an equal Number of viſible Points with it; and conſequently they ſhall both be thought by him to have the ſame Magnitude. Hence it is evident, one in thoſe Circumſtances would judge his Thumb, with which he might hide a Tower, or hinder its being ſeen, equal to that Tower, or his Hand, the Interpoſition whereof might conceal the Firmament from his View, equal to the Firmament: How great an Inequality ſoever there may, in our Apprehenſions, ſeem to be betwixt thoſe two

two things, becauſe of the cuſtomary and cloſe Connexion that has grown up in our Minds between the Objects of Sight and Touch; whereby the very different and diſtinct Ideas of thoſe two Senſes, are ſo blended and confounded together, as to be miſtaken for one and the ſame thing; out of which Prejudice we cannot eaſily extricate our ſelves.

LXXX. For the better explaining the Nature of Viſion, and ſetting the Manner wherein we perceive Magnitudes in a due Light, I ſhall proceed to make ſome Obſervations concerning Matters relating thereto, whereof the want of Reflexion, and duly ſeparating between tangible and viſible Ideas, is apt to create in us miſtaken and confuſed Notions. And *Firſt*, I ſhall obſerve that the *Minimum Viſibile* is exactly equal in all Beings whatſoever, that are endowed with the viſive Faculty. No exquiſite Formation of the Eye, no peculiar Sharpneſs of Sight can make it leſs in one Creature than in another; for it not being diſtinguiſhable into Parts, nor in any wiſe conſiſting of them, it muſt neceſſarily be the ſame to all. For ſuppoſe it otherwiſe, and that the *Minimum Viſibile* of a Mite, for Inſtance, be leſs

leſs than the *Minimum Viſibile* of a Man: the latter therefore may by Detraction of ſome part be made equal to the former: It doth therefore conſiſt of Parts, which is inconſiſtent with the Notion of a *Minimum Viſibile*, or Point.

LXXXI. It will perhaps be objected that the *Minimum Viſibile* of a Man doth really, and in it ſelf contain Parts whereby it ſurpaſſes that of a Mite, though they are not perceivable by the Man. To which I anſwer, the *Minimum Viſibile* having (in like manner as all other the proper and immediate Objects of Sight) been ſhewn not to have any Exiſtence without the Mind of him who ſees it, it follows there cannot be any Part of it that is not actually perceived, and therefore viſible. Now for any Object to contain ſeveral diſtinct viſible Parts, and at the ſame time to be a *Minimum Viſibile*, is a manifeſt Contradiction.

LXXXII. Of theſe viſible Points we ſee at all times an equal Number. It is every whit as great when our View is contracted and bounded by near Objects, as when it is extended to larger and remoter. For it being impoſſible that one *Minimum Viſibile*

Viſible ſhould obſcure, or keep out of Sight more than one other, it is a plain Conſequence; that when my View is on all ſides bounded by the Walls of my Study, I ſee juſt as many viſible Points as I could, in caſe that by the Removal of the Study-walls, and all other Obſtructions, I had a full Proſpect of the circumjacent Fields, Mountains, Sea, and open Firmament: for ſo long as I am ſhut up within the Walls, by their Interpoſition, every Point of the external Objects is covered from my View: But each Point that is ſeen being able to cover or exclude from Sight, one only other correſponding Point; it follows, that whilſt my Sight is confined to thoſe narrow Walls, I ſee as many Points, or *Minima Viſibilia*, as I ſhould were thoſe Walls away, by looking on all the external Objects, whoſe Proſpect is intercepted by them. Whenever therefore we are ſaid to have a greater Proſpect at one time than another, this muſt be underſtood with relation, not to the proper and immediate, but the ſecondary and mediate Objects of Viſion, which, as hath been ſhewn, properly belong to the Touch.

LXXXIII. The viſive Faculty conſidered, with reference to its immediate Objects,

jects, may be found to labour of two Defects, *First*, In respect of the Extent or Number of visible Points that are at once perceivable by it, which is narrow and limited to a certain Degree. It can take in at one View but a certain determinate Number of *Minima Visibilia*, beyond which it cannot extend its Prospect. *Secondly*, Our Sight is defective in that its View is not only narrow, but also for the most part confused: of those things that we take in at one Prospect, we can see but a few at once clearly and unconfusedly: and the more we fix our Sight on any one Object, by so much the darker and more indistinct shall the rest appear.

LXXXIV. Corresponding to these two Defects of Sight, we may imagine as many Perfections, to wit, *1st.* That of comprehending in one View a greater Number of visible Points. *2dly.* Of being able to view them all equally and at once, with the utmost Clearness and Distinction. That those Perfections are not actually in some Intelligences of a different Order and Capacity from ours, it is impossible for us to know.

LXXXV.

LXXXV. In neither of thoſe two ways, do Microſcopes contribute to the Improvement of Sight; for when we look through a Microſcope, we neither ſee more viſible Points, nor are the collateral Points more diſtinct than when we look with the naked Eye, at Objects placed in a due Diſtance. A Microſcope brings us as it were into a new World: It preſents us with a new Scene of viſible Objects, quite different from what we behold with the naked Eye. But herein conſiſts the moſt remarkable Difference, to wit, that whereas the Objects perceived by the Eye alone, have a certain Connexion with Tangible Objects, whereby we are taught to foreſee what will enſue upon the Approach or Application of diſtant Objects to the Parts of our own Body, which much conduceth to its Preſervation; there is not the like Connexion between things Tangible and thoſe viſible Objects, that are perceived by help of a fine Microſcope.

LXXXVI. Hence it is evident, that were our Eyes turned into the Nature of Microſcopes, we ſhould not be much benefited by the Change; we ſhould be deprived of the forementioned Advantage we at preſent receive by the viſive Faculty;

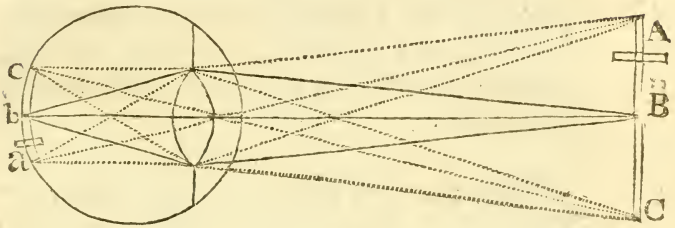
and have left us only the empty Amuſement of Seeing, without any other Benefit ariſing from it. But in that Caſe, it will perhaps be ſaid, our Sight would be endued with a far greater Sharpneſs and Penetration than it now hath. But it is certain from what we have already ſhewn, that the *Minimum Viſibile* is never greater or leſſer, but in all Caſes conſtantly the ſame: and in the Caſe of microſcopical Eyes, I ſee only this Difference, to wit, that upon the ceaſing of a certain obſervable Connexion betwixt the divers Perceptions of Sight and Touch, which before enabled us to regulate our Actions by the Eye, it would now be rendered utterly unſerviceable to that Purpoſe.

LXXXVII. Upon the whole, it ſeems that if we conſider the Uſe and End of Sight, together with the preſent State and Circumſtances of our Being, we ſhall not find any great Cauſe to complain of any Defect or Imperfection in it, or eaſily conceive how it could be mended. With ſuch admirable Wiſdom is that Faculty contrived, both for the Pleaſure and Convenience of Life.

LXXXVIII. Having finiſhed what I intended to ſay, concerning the Diſtance and Magnitude of Objects, I come now to treat of the Manner, wherein the Mind perceives by Sight their Situation. Among the Diſcoveries of the laſt Age, it is reputed none of the leaſt, that the Manner of Viſion hath been more clearly explained, than ever it had been before. There is, at this Day, no one Ignorant, that the Pictures of external Objects are painted on the *Retina*, or Fund of the Eye. That we can ſee nothing which is not ſo painted: And that, according as the Picture is more diſtinct or confuſed, ſo alſo is the Perception we have of the Object: But then in this Explication of Viſion, there occurs one mighty Difficulty. The Objects are painted in an inverted Order on the Bottom of the Eye: The upper part of any Object being painted on the lower part of the Eye, and the lower part of the Object on the upper part of the Eye: And ſo alſo as to Right and Left. Since therefore the Pictures are thus inverted, it is demanded how it comes to paſs, that we ſee the Objects erect and in their natural Poſture?

LXXXIX. In anſwer to this Difficulty, we are told, that the Mind perceiving an Im-

Impulſe of a Ray of Light, on the upper part of the Eye, conſiders this Ray as coming in a direct Line, from the lower part of the Object; and in like manner tracing the Ray that ſtrikes on the lower part of the Eye, it is directed to the upper part of the Object. Thus in the adjacent Figure C the lower Point of the Object ABC is projected on *c* the upper part of the Eye. So likewiſe, the higheſt



Point A is projected on *a* the loweſt part of the Eye, which makes the Repreſentation *c b a* inverted: But the Mind conſidering the Stroke that is made on *c* as coming in the ſtraight Line C *c* from the lower end of the Object; and the Stroke or Impulſe on *a*, as coming in the Line A *a* from the upper end of the Object; is directed to make a right Judgment of the Situation of the Object ABC, notwithſtanding the Picture of it is inverted. This is illuſtrated by conceiving a blind

Man, who holding in his Hands two Sticks that croſs each other, doth with them touch the Extremities of an Object, placed in a perpendicular Situation. It is certain, this Man will judge that to be the upper Part of the Object, which he touches with the Stick held in the undermoſt Hand, and that to be the lower Part of the Object, which he touches with the Stick in his uppermoſt Hand. This is the common Explication of the erect Appearance of Objects, which is generally received and acquieſced in, being (as Mr. *Molyneux* tells us *) *allowed by all Men as Satisfactory.*

XC. But this Account to me does not ſeem in any Degree true. Did I perceive thoſe Impulſes, Decuſſations, and Directions of the Rays of Light, in like manner as hath been ſet forth, then, indeed, it would not be altogether void of Probability. And there might be ſome Pretence for the Compariſon of the Blind-Man and his croſs Sticks. But the Caſe is far otherwiſe. I know very well that I perceive no ſuch thing. And of Conſequence, I cannot thereby make an Eſtimate of the Situation of Objects, I appeal to any one's Experience, whe-

* Diopt. par. 2. c. 7. p. 289.

ther he be conſcious to himſelf, that he thinks on the Interſection made by the radious Pencils, or purſues the Impulſes they give in right Lines, whenever he perceives by Sight the Poſition of any Object? To me it ſeems evident, that croſſing and tracing of the Rays, is never thought on by Children, Idiots, or in truth by any other, ſave only thoſe who have applied themſelves to the Study of Optics. And for the Mind to judge of the Situation of Objects by thoſe things, without perceiving them, or to perceive them without knowing it, is equally beyond my Comprehenſion. Add to this, that the explaining the manner of Viſion by the Example of croſs Sticks, and hunting for the Object along the Axes of the radious Pencils, doth ſuppoſe the proper Objects of Sight to be perceived at a Diſtance from us, contrary to what hath been demonſtrated.

XCI. It remains, therefore, that we look for ſome other Explication of this Difficulty: And I believe it not impoſſible to find one, provided we examine it to the Bottom, and carefully diſtinguiſh between the Ideas of Sight and Touch; which cannot be too oft inculcated in

treating of Vision: But more especially throughout the Consideration of this Affair, we ought to carry that Distinction in our Thoughts: For that from want of a right Understanding thereof, the Difficulty of explaining erect Vision seems chiefly to arise.

XCII. In order to disentangle our Minds, from whatever Prejudices we may entertain with relation to the Subject in hand, nothing seems more apposite, than the taking into our Thoughts the Case of one born blind, and afterwards, when grown up, made to see. And though perhaps, it may not be an easy Task to divest our selves intirely of the Experience received from Sight, so as to be able to put our Thoughts exactly in the Posture of such a one's; we must, nevertheless, as far as possible, endeavour to frame true Conceptions, of what might reasonably be supposed to pass in his Mind.

XCIII. It is certain, that a Man actually blind, and who had continued so from his Birth, would by the Sense of Feeling attain to have Ideas of Upper and Lower. By the Motion of his Hand he might discern the Situation of any tangi-

ble Object placed within his Reach. That Part on which he felt himself supported, or towards which he perceived his Body to gravitate, he would term lower, and the contrary to this upper; and accordingly denominate whatsoever Objects he touched.

XCIV. But then, whatever Judgments he makes concerning the Situation of Objects, are confined to those only that are perceivable by Touch. All those things that are intangible, and of a spiritual Nature, his Thoughts and Desires, his Passions, and in general all the Modifications of the Soul, to these he would never apply the Terms Upper and Lower, except only in a metaphorical Sense. He may, perhaps, by way of Allusion, speak of high or low Thoughts: But those Terms in their proper Signification, would never be applied to any thing, that was not conceived to exist without the Mind. For a Man born blind, and remaining in the same State, could mean nothing else by the Words Higher and Lower, than a greater or lesser Distance from the Earth: Which Distance he would measure by the Motion or Application of his Hand, or some other part of his Body. It is, therefore,

evident, that all thoſe things which, in reſpect of each other, would by him be thought higher or lower, muſt be ſuch as were conceived to exiſt without his Mind, in the ambient Space.

XCV. Whence it plainly follows, that ſuch a one, if we ſuppoſe him made to ſee, would not at firſt Sight think, that any thing he ſaw was high or low, erect or inverted; for it hath been already demonſtrated in Sect XLI. that he would not think the Things he perceived by Sight to be at any Diſtance from him, or without his Mind. The Objects to which he had hitherto been uſed to apply the Terms Up and Down, High and Low, were ſuch only as affected, or were ſome way perceived by his Touch: But the proper Objects of Viſion make a new Set of Ideas, perfectly diſtinct and different from the former, and which can in no ſort make themſelves perceived by Touch. There is, therefore, nothing at all that could induce him to think thoſe Terms applicable to them: Nor would he ever think it, till ſuch time as he had obſerved their Connexion with tangible Objects, and the ſame Prejudice began to inſinuate it ſelf into his Underſtanding, which

which from their Infancy had grown up in the Underſtandings of other Men.

XCVI. To ſet this Matter in a clearer Light, I ſhall make uſe of an Example. Suppoſe the above-mentioned blind Perſon, by his Touch, perceives a Man to ſtand Erect. Let us inquire into the manner of this. By the Application of his Hand to the ſeveral Parts of a humane Body, he had perceived different tangible Ideas, which being collected into ſundry complex ones have diſtinct Names annexed to them. Thus one Combination of a certain tangible Figure, Bulk, and Conſiſtency of Parts is called the Head, another the Hand, a third the Foot, and ſo of the reſt: All which complex Ideas could, in his Underſtanding, be made up only of Ideas perceivable by Touch. He had alſo by his Touch obtained an Idea of Earth or Ground, towards which he perceives the Parts of his Body to have a natural Tendency. Now, by Erect nothing more being meant, than that perpendicular Poſition of a Man, wherein his Feet are neareſt to the Earth: If the blind Perſon by moving his Hand, over the Parts of the Man who ſtands before him, perceives the tangible Ideas that compoſe

compoſe the Head, to be fartheſt from, and thoſe that compoſe the Feet to be neareſt to, that other Combination of tangible Ideas which he calls Earth: He will denominate that Man Erect. But if we ſuppoſe him on a ſudden to receive his Sight, and that he behold a Man ſtanding before him, it is evident in that Caſe, he would neither judge the Man he ſees to be Erect nor Inverted; for he never having known thoſe Terms applied to any other, ſave tangible Things, or which exiſted in the Space without him, and what he ſees neither being Tangible, nor perceived as exiſting without, he could not know that in Propriety of Language they were applicable to it.

XCVII. Afterwards, when upon turning his Head or Eyes up and down to the right and left, he ſhall obſerve the viſible Objects to change, and ſhall alſo attain to know, that they are called by the ſame Names, and connected with the Objects perceived by Touch; then, indeed, he will come to ſpeak of them and their Situation, in the ſame Terms that he has been uſed to apply to tangible Things: And thoſe that he perceives by turning up his Eyes, he will call Upper, and thoſe that by

by turning down his Eyes, he will call Lower.

XCVIII. And this ſeems to me the true Reaſon, why he ſhould think thoſe Objects uppermoſt that are painted on the lower part of his Eye: For, by turning the Eye up they ſhall be diſtinctly ſeen; as likewiſe thoſe that are painted on the higheſt part of the Eye ſhall be diſtinctly ſeen, by turning the Eye down, and are for that Reaſon eſteemed loweſt: For we have ſhewn that to the immediate Objects of Sight, conſidered in themſelves, he would not attribute the Terms High and Low. It muſt therefore be on account of ſome Circumſtances, which are obſerved to attend them: And theſe, it is plain, are the Actions of turning the Eye up and down, which ſuggeſt a very obvious Reaſon, why the Mind ſhould denominate the Objects of Sight accordingly High or Low. And without this Motion of the Eye, this turning it up and down in order to diſcern different Objects, doubtleſs Erect, Inverſe, and other the like Terms relating to the Poſition of tangible Objects, would never have been transferred, or in any degree apprehended to belong to the Ideas of Sight: The meer

Act

Act of Seeing including nothing in it to that Purpose; whereas the different Situations of the Eye naturally direct the Mind to make a suitable Judgment of the Situation of Objects intromitted by it.

XCIX. Farther, when he has by Experience learned the Connexion there is between the several Ideas of Sight and Touch, he will be able, by the Perception he has of the Situation of visible Things in respect of one another, to make a sudden and true Estimate of the Situation of outward, tangible Things corresponding to them. And thus it is, he shall perceive by Sight the Situation of External Objects, which do not properly fall under that Sense.

C. I know we are very prone to think, that if just made to see, we should judge of the Situation of visible Things as we do now: But, we are also as prone to think, that at first Sight, we should in the same way apprehend the Distance and Magnitude of Objects, as we do now: Which hath been shewn to be a false and groundless Persuasion. And for the like Reasons, the same Censure may be past on

on the positive Assurance, that most Men, before they have thought sufficiently of the Matter, might have of their being able to determine by the Eye at first view, whether Objects were erect or inverse.

CI. It will, perhaps, be objected to our Opinion, that a Man, for instance, being thought erect when his Feet are next the Earth, and inverted when his Head is next the Earth, it doth hence follow, that by the meer Act of Vision, without any Experience or altering the Situation of the Eye, we should have determined whether he were erect or inverted: For both the Earth it self, and the Limbs of the Man who stands thereon, being equally perceived by Sight, one cannot choose seeing, what part of the Man is neareſt the Earth, and what part fartheſt from it, *i. e.* whether he be erect or inverted.

CII. To which I answer, the Ideas which constitute the tangible Earth and Man, are intirely different from those which constitute the visible Earth and Man. Nor was it possible, by virtue of the visive Faculty alone, without superadding any

any Experience of Touch, or altering the Poſition of the Eye, ever to have known, or ſo much as ſuſpected, there had been any Relation or Connexion between them: Hence, a Man at firſt view would not denominate any thing he ſaw Earth, or Head, or Foot; and conſequently, he could not tell by the meer Act of Viſion, whether the Head or Feet were neareſt the Earth: Nor, indeed, would we have thereby any thought of Earth or Man, erect or inverſe, at all: Which will be made yet more evident, if we nicely obſerve, and make a particular Compariſon between the Ideas of both Senſes.

CIII. That which I ſee is only variety of Light and Colours. That which I feel is hard, or ſoft, hot or cold, rough or ſmooth. What Similitude, what Connexion have thoſe Ideas with theſe? Or how is it poſſible, that any one ſhould ſee Reaſon, to give one and the ſame Name to Combinations of Ideas ſo very different, before he had experienced their Coexiſtence? We do not find there is any neceſſary Connexion betwixt this or that tangible Quality, and any Colour whatſoever. And we may ſometimes

times perceive Colours, where there is nothing to be felt. All which doth make it manifeſt, that no Man at firſt receiving of his Sight, would know there was any Agreement between this or that particular Object of his Sight, and any Object of Touch he had been already acquainted with: The Colours therefore of the Head, would to him no more ſuggeſt the Idea of Head, than they would the Idea of Foot.

CIV. Farther, we have at large ſhewn (vid. Sect. LXIII and LXIV.) there is no diſcoverable, neceſſary Connexion, between any given viſible Magnitude, and any one particular tangible Magnitude; but that it is intirely the reſult of Cuſtom and Experience, and depends on foreign and accidental Circumſtances, that we can by the Perception of viſible Extenſion inform our ſelves, what may be the Extenſion of any tangible Object connected with it. Hence it is certain that neither the viſible Magnitude of Head or Foot, would bring along with them into the Mind, at firſt opening of the Eyes, the reſpective tangible Magnitudes of thoſe Parts.

CV. By

CV. By the foregoing Section, it is plain the visible Figure of any Part of the Body hath no necessary Connexion with the tangible Figure thereof, so as at first Sight to suggest it to the Mind: For Figure is the Termination of Magnitude; whence it follows, that no visible Magnitude having in its own Nature an aptness to suggest any one particular tangible Magnitude, so neither can any visible Figure be inseparably connected with its corresponding tangible Figure: So as of it self and in a way prior to Experience, it might suggest it to the Understanding. This will be farther evident, if we consider that what seems smooth and round to the Touch, may to Sight, if viewed through a Microscope, seem quite otherwise.

CVI. From all which laid together and duly considered, we may clearly deduce this Inference. In the first Act of Vision, no Idea entering by the Eye, would have a perceivable Connexion with the Ideas to which the Names Earth, Man, Head, Foot, *&c.* were annexed in the Understanding of a Person blind from his Birth; so as in any sort to introduce them into his Mind, or make themselves be called by the same Names, and reputed the same Things

Things with them, as afterwards they come to be.

CVII. There doth, nevertheleſs, remain one Difficulty, which perhaps may ſeem to preſs hard on our Opinion, and deſerve not to be paſſed over: For though it be granted that neither the Colour, Size, nor Figure of the viſible Feet have any neceſſary Connexion with the Ideas that compoſe the tangible Feet, ſo as to bring them at firſt ſight into my Mind, or make me in danger of confounding them before I had been uſed to, and for ſome time experienced their Connexion: Yet thus much ſeems undeniable, namely, that the Number of the viſible Feet, being the ſame with that of the tangible Feet, I may from hence without any Experience of Sight, reaſonably conclude, that they repreſent or are connected with the Feet rather than the Head. I ſay, it ſeems the Idea of two viſible Feet will ſooner ſuggeſt to the Mind, the Idea of two tangible Feet than of one Head; ſo that the blind Man upon firſt Reception of the viſive Faculty might know, which were the Feet or Two, and which the Head or One.

CVIII. In order to get clear of this ſeeming Difficulty, we need only obſerve, that Diverſity of viſible Objects doth not neceſſarily infer diverſity of tangible Objects correſponding to them. A Picture painted with great variety of Colours affects the Touch in one uniform manner; it is therefore evident, that I do not by any neceſſary Conſecution, independent of Experience, judge of the number of things tangible, from the number of things viſible. I ſhould not therefore at firſt opening my Eyes conclude, that becauſe I ſee two I ſhall feel two. How, therefore can I, before Experience teaches me, know that the viſible Legs, becauſe two, are connected with the tangible Legs, or the viſible Head, becauſe one is connected with the tangible Head? The truth is, the things I ſee are ſo very different and heterogeneous from the things I feel, that the Perception of the one would never have ſuggeſted the other to my thoughts, or enabled me to paſs the leaſt Judgment thereon, until I had experienced their Connexion.

CIX. But for a fuller Illuſtration of this Matter, it ought to be conſidered that Number (however ſome may reckon it amongſt

amongſt the primary Qualities) is nothing fixed and ſettled, really exiſting in things themſelves. It is intirely the Creature of the Mind, conſidering, either an Idea by it ſelf, or any Combination of Ideas to which it gives one Name, and ſo makes it paſs for an Unite. According as the Mind variouſly combines its Ideas, the Unite varies: and as the Unite, ſo the Number, which is only a Collection of Unites, doth alſo vary. We call a Window one, a Chimney one, and yet a Houſe in which there are many Windows, and many Chimneys, hath an equal right to be called one, and many Houſes go to the making of one City. In theſe and the like Inſtances, it is evident the *Unite* conſtantly relates to the particular Draughts the Mind makes of its Ideas, to which it affixes Names, and wherein it includes more or leſs, as beſt ſuits its own Ends and Purpoſes. Whatever therefore the Mind conſiders as one, that is an Unite. Every Combination of Ideas is conſidered as one thing by the mind, and in token thereof is marked by one Name. Now, this naming and combining together of Ideas is perfectly arbitrary, and done by the Mind in ſuch ſort, as Experience ſhews it to be moſt convenient: Without which, our Ideas had

never been collected into ſuch ſundry diſtinct Combinations as they now are.

CX. Hence it follows, that a Man born blind, and afterwards, when grown up, made to ſee, would not in the firſt Act of Viſion, parcel out the Ideas of Sight, into the ſame diſtinct Collections that others do, who have experienced which do regularly coexiſt and are proper to be bundled up together under one Name. He would not, for Example, make into one complex Idea, and thereby eſteem an Unite all thoſe particular Ideas, which conſtitute the viſible Head or Foot. For there can be no Reaſon aſſigned why he ſhould do ſo, barely upon his ſeeing a Man ſtand upright before him: There croud into his Mind the Ideas which compoſe the viſible Man, in company with all the other Ideas of Sight perceiv'd at the ſame time: But all theſe Ideas offered at once to his View, he would not diſtribute into ſundry diſtinct Combinations, till ſuch time as by obſerving the Motion of the Parts of the Man and other Experiences, he comes to know, which are to be ſeparated, and which to be collected together.

CXI.

CXI. From what hath been premiſed, it is plain the Objects of Sight and Touch make, if I may ſo ſay, two Sets of Ideas, which are widely different from each other. To Objects of either kind, we indifferently attribute the Terms high and low, right and left, and ſuch like, denoting the Poſition or Situation of things: But then we muſt well obſerve that the Poſition of any Object is determined with reſpect only to Objects of the ſame Senſe. We ſay any Object of Touch is high or low, according as it is more or leſs diſtant from the tangible Earth: And in like manner we denominate any Object of Sight high or low, in Proportion as it is more or leſs diſtant from the viſible Earth: But to define the Situation of viſible Things, with relation to the Diſtance they bear from any tangible Thing, or *vice verſa*, this were abſurd and perfectly unintelligible. For all viſible things are equally in the Mind, and take up no part of the external Space: And conſequently are equidiſtant from any tangible thing, which exiſts without the Mind.

CXII. Or rather to ſpeak truly, the proper Objects of Sight are at no Diſtance, neither near nor far, from any tangible

Thing. For if we inquire narrowly into the Matter we ſhall find that thoſe things only are compared together in reſpect of Diſtance, which exiſt after the ſame manner, or appertain unto the ſame Senſe. For by the Diſtance between any two Points, nothing more is meant than the Number of intermediate Points: If the given Points are viſible, the Diſtance between them is marked out by the Number of the interjacent viſible Points: If they are tangible, the Diſtance between them is a Line conſiſting of tangible Points; but if they are one tangible, and the other viſible, the Diſtance between them doth neither conſiſt of Points perceivable by Sight nor by Touch, *i. e.* it is utterly inconceivable. This, perhaps, will not find an eaſy Admiſſion into all Mens Underſtanding: However, I ſhould gladly be informed whether it be not true, by any one who will be at the pains to reflect a little, and apply it home to his Thoughts.

CXIII. The not obſerving what has been delivered in the two laſt Sections, ſeems to have occaſioned no ſmall part of the Difficulty that occurs in the Buſineſs of erect Appearances. The Head, which is

is painted neareſt the Earth, ſeems to be fartheſt from it: and on the other hand, the Feet, which are painted fartheſt from the Earth, are thought neareſt to it. Herein lies the Difficulty, which vaniſhes if we expreſs the thing more clearly and free from Ambiguity, thus: How comes it that, to the Eye, the viſible Head which is neareſt the tangible Earth, ſeems fartheſt from the Earth, and the viſible Feet, which are fartheſt from the tangible Earth, ſeem neareſt the Earth? The Queſtion being thus propoſed, who ſees not, the Difficulty is founded on a Suppoſition, that the Eye, or viſive Faculty, or rather the Soul by means thereof, ſhould judge of the Situation of viſible Objects, with reference to their Diſtance from the tangible Earth? Whereas it is evident the tangible Earth is not perceived by Sight: And it hath been ſhewn in the two laſt preceding Sections, that the Location of viſible Objects is determined only by the Diſtance they bear from one another; and that it is Nonſenſe to talk of Diſtance, far or near, between a viſible and tangible Thing.

CXIV. If we confine our Thoughts to the proper Objects of Sight, the whole is

plain and eaſy. The Head is painted fartheſt from, and the Feet neareſt to the viſible Earth; and ſo they appear to be. What is there ſtrange or unaccountable in this? Let us ſuppoſe the Pictures in the Fund of the Eye, to be the immediate Objects of the Sight. The Conſequence is, that things ſhould appear in the ſame Poſture they are painted in; and is it not ſo? The Head which is ſeen, ſeems fartheſt from the Earth which is ſeen; and the Feet, which are ſeen, ſeem neareſt to the Earth which is ſeen; and juſt ſo they are painted.

CXV. But, ſay you, the Picture of the Man is inverted, and yet the Appearance is erect: I ask, what mean you by the Picture of the Man, or, which is the ſame thing, the viſible Man's being inverted? You tell me it is inverted, becauſe the Heels are uppermoſt, and the Head undermoſt? Explain me this. You ſay, that by the Head's being undermoſt, you mean that it is neareſt to the Earth; and by the Heels being uppermoſt, that they are fartheſt from the Earth. I ask again, what Earth you mean? You cannot mean the Earth that is painted on the Eye, or the viſible Earth: For the Picture of the Head is fartheſt

fartheſt from the Picture of the Earth, and the Picture of the Feet neareſt to the Picture of the Earth; and accordingly the viſible Head is fartheſt from the viſible Earth, and the viſible Feet neareſt to it. It remains, therefore, that you mean the tangible Earth, and ſo determine the Situation of viſible things with reſpect to tangible things; contrary to what hath been demonſtrated in SECT. CXI. and CXII. The two diſtinct Provinces of Sight and Touch ſhould be conſidered apart, and as if their Objects had no Intercourſe, no manner of Relation one to another, in point of Diſtance or Poſition.

CXVI. Farther, what greatly contributes to make us miſtake in this Matter is, that when we think of the Pictures in the Fund of the Eye, we imagine our ſelves looking on the Fund of another's Eye, or another looking on the Fund of our own Eye, and beholding the Pictures painted thereon. Suppoſe two Eyes A and B: A from ſome diſtance looking on the Pictures in B ſees them inverted, and for that Reaſon concludes they are inverted in B: But this is wrong. There are projected in little on the Bottom of A, the Images of the Pictures of, ſuppoſe Man, Earth, *&c.* which are painted on B. And beſides theſe, the Eye

Eye B it ſelf, and the Objects which environ it, together with another Earth, are projected in a larger Size on A. Now, by the Eye A, theſe larger Images are deemed the true Objects, and the leſſer only Pictures in miniature. And it is with reſpect to thoſe greater Images, that it determines the Situation of the ſmaller Images: So that comparing the little Man with the great Earth, A judges him inverted, or that the Feet are fartheſt from, and the Head neareſt to the great Earth. Whereas, if A compare the little Man with the little Earth, then he will appear erect, *i.e.* his Head ſhall ſeem fartheſt from, and his Feet neareſt to the little Earth. But we muſt conſider that B does not ſee two Earths as A does: It ſees only what is repreſented by the little Pictures in A, and conſequently ſhall judge the Man erect: For, in truth, the Man in B is not inverted, for there the Feet are next the Earth; but it is the Repreſentation of it in A which is inverted, for there the Head of the Repreſentation of the Picture of the Man in B is next the Earth, and the Feet fartheſt from the Earth, meaning the Earth which is without the Repreſentation of the Pictures in B. For if you take the little Images of the Pictures in B, and conſider them by themſelves, and with reſpect only

to

to one another, they are all Erect and in their natural Posture.

CXVII. Farther, there lies a Mistake in our imagining that the Pictures of external Objects are painted on the Bottom of the Eye. It hath been shewn, there is no Resemblance between the Ideas of Sight and things Tangible. It hath likewise been demonstrated, that the proper Objects of Sight do not exist without the Mind. Whence it clearly follows, that the Pictures painted on the Bottom of the Eye, are not the Pictures of external Objects. Let any one consult his own Thoughts, and then say what Affinity, what Likeness there is between that certain Variety and Disposition of Colours, which constitute the visible Man, or Picture of a Man, and that other Combination of far different Ideas, sensible by Touch, which compose the tangible Man. But if this be the Case, how come they to be accounted Pictures or Images, since that supposes them to copy or represent some Originals or other?

CXVIII. To which I answer: In the forementioned Instance, the Eye A takes the little Images, included within the Representation

preſentation of the other Eye B, to be Pictures or Copies, whereof the Archetypes are not things exiſting without, but the larger Pictures projected on its own Fund: and which by A are not thought Pictures, but the Originals, or true Things themſelves. Though if we ſuppoſe a third Eye C, from a due Diſtance to behold the Fund of A, then indeed the Things projected thereon, ſhall, to C, ſeem Pictures or Images, in the ſame Senſe that thoſe projected on B do to A.

CXIX. Rightly to conceive this Point, we muſt carefully diſtinguiſh between the Ideas of Sight and Touch, between the viſible and tangible Eye; for certainly on the tangible Eye, nothing either is or ſeems to be painted. Again, the viſible Eye, as well as all other viſible Objects, hath been ſhewn to exiſt only in the Mind, which perceiving its own Ideas, and comparing them together, calls ſome *Pictures* in reſpect of others. What hath been ſaid, being rightly comprehended and laid together, doth, I think, afford a full and genuine Explication of the erect Appearance of Objects; which Phænomenon, I muſt confeſs, I do not ſee how it can be explained by any Theories of Viſion hitherto made publick.

CXX.

CXX. In treating of these things, the use of Language is apt to occasion some Obscurity and Confusion, and create in us wrong Ideas: For Language being accommodated to the common Notions and Prejudices of Men, it is scarce possible to deliver the naked and precise Truth, without great Circumlocution, Impropriety, and (to an unwary Reader) seeming Contradictions; I do, therefore, once for all desire whoever shall think it worth his while to understand what I have written concerning Vision, that he would not stick in this or that Phrase, or Manner of Expression, but candidly collect my Meaning from the whole Sum and Tenor of my Discourse, and laying aside the Words as much as possible, consider the bare Notions themselves, and then judge whether they are agreeable to Truth and his own Experience, or no.

CXXI. We have shewn the way wherein the Mind by mediation of visible Ideas doth perceive or apprehend the Distance, Magnitude, and Situation of tangible Objects. We come now to inquire more particularly concerning the Difference between the Ideas of Sight and Touch, which are called by the same Names, and see whether

ther there be any Idea common to both Senſes. From what we have at large ſet forth and demonſtrated in the foregoing Parts of this Treatiſe, it is plain there is no one ſelf ſame numerical Extenſion, perceived both by Sight and Touch; but that the particular Figures and Extenſions perceived by Sight, however they may be called by the ſame Names, and reputed the ſame Things, with thoſe perceived by Touch, are nevertheleſs different, and have an Exiſtence diſtinct and ſeparate from them: So that the Queſtion is not now concerning the ſame numerical Ideas, but whether there be any one and the ſame ſort or Species of Ideas equally perceivable to both Senſes; Or, in other Words, whether Extenſion, Figure, and Motion perceived by Sight, are not ſpecifically diſtinct from Extenſion, Figure, and Motion perceived by Touch.

CXXII. But before I come more particularly to diſcuſs this Matter, I find it proper to conſider Extenſion in Abſtract: For of this there is much Talk, and I am apt to think, that when Men ſpeak of Extenſion, as being an Idea common to two Senſes, it is with a ſecret Suppoſition, that we can ſingle out Extenſion

ſion from all other tangible and viſible Qualities, and form thereof an abſtract Idea, which Idea they will have common both to Sight and Touch. We are therefore to underſtand by Extenſion in abſtract, an Idea of Extenſion, for Inſtance, a Line or Surface, intirely ſtript of all other ſenſible Qualities and Circumſtances that might determine it to any particular Exiſtence; it is neither black nor white, nor red, nor hath it any Colour at all, or any tangible Quality whatſoever, and conſequently it is of no finite determinate Magnitude: For that which bounds or diſtinguiſhes one Extenſion from another, is ſome Quality or Circumſtance wherein they diſagree.

CXXIII. Now I do not find that I can perceive, imagine, or any wiſe frame in my Mind ſuch an abſtract Idea, as is here ſpoken of. A Line or Surface, which is neither black, nor white, nor blue, nor yellow, *&c.* nor long, nor ſhort, nor rough, nor ſmooth, nor ſquare, nor round, *&c.* is perfectly incomprehenſible. This I am ſure of as to my ſelf: how far the Faculties of other Men may reach, they beſt can tell.

CXXIV.

CXXIV. It is commonly ſaid, that the Object of Geometry is abſtract Extenſion: but Geometry contemplates Figures: Now, Figure is the Termination of Magnitude: but we have ſhewn that Extenſion in Abſtract hath no finite determinate Magnitude. Whence it clearly follows that it can have no Figure, and conſequently is not the Object of Geometry. It is indeed a Tenet as well of the modern as of the ancient Philoſophers, that all general Truths are concerning univerſal abſtract Ideas; without which, we are told, there could be no Science, no Demonſtration of any general Propoſition in Geometry. But it were no hard matter, did I think it neceſſary to my preſent Purpoſe, to ſhew that Propoſitions and Demonſtrations in Geometry might be univerſal, though they who make them, never think of abſtract general Ideas of Triangles or Circles.

CXXV. After reiterated Endeavours to apprehend the general Idea of a Triangle, I have found it altogether incomprehenſible. And ſurely if any one were able to introduce that Idea into my Mind, it muſt be the Author of the *Eſſay concerning Humane Underſtanding*; He, who has ſo far diſtin-

diſtinguiſhed himſelf from the generality of Writers, by the Clearneſs and Significancy of what he ſays. Let us therefore ſee how this celebrated Author deſcribes the general, or abſtract Idea of a Triangle. 'It muſt be (ſays he) neither Oblique, nor Rectangular, neither Equilateral, 'Equicrural, nor Scalenum; but all and 'none of theſe at once. In effect it is 'ſomewhat imperfect that cannot exiſt; 'an Idea, wherein ſome Parts of ſeveral 'different and inconſiſtent Ideas are put 'together.' *Eſſay on Hum. Underſtand. B.* iv. *C.* 7. *S.* 9. This is the Idea, which he thinks needful, for the Enlargement of Knowledge, which is the Subject of Mathematical Demonſtration, and without which we could never come to know any general Propoſition concerning Triangles. That Author acknowledges it doth 'require ſome Pains and Skill to form this 'general Idea of a Triangle.' *Ibid.* But had he called to mind what he ſays in another Place, to wit, 'That Ideas of 'mixed Modes wherein any inconſiſtent 'Ideas are put together, cannot ſo much 'as exiſt in the Mind, *i. e.* be conceived.' *Vid. B.* iii. *C.* 10. *S.* 33. *Ibid.* I ſay, had this occurred to his Thoughts, it is not improbable he would have owned it above

all the Pains and Skill he was maſter of, to form the above-mentioned Idea of a Triangle, which is made up of manifeſt, ſtaring Contradictions. That a Man who laid ſo great a Streſs on clear and determinate Ideas, ſhould nevertheleſs talk at this rate, ſeems very ſurpriſing. But the Wonder will leſſen if it be conſidered, that the Source whence this Opinion flows, is the prolific Womb which has brought forth innumerable Errors and Difficulties, in all parts of Philoſophy, and in all the Sciences: But this Matter, taken in its full Extent, were a Subject too comprehenſive to be inſiſted on in this place. And ſo much for Extenſion in Abſtract.

CXXVI. Some, perhaps, may think pure Space, *Vacuum*, or Trine Dimenſion to be equally the Object of Sight and Touch: But though we have a very great Propenſion, to think the Ideas of Outneſs and Space to be the immediate Object of Sight; yet, if I miſtake not, in the foregoing Parts of this Eſſay, that hath been clearly demonſtrated to be a mere Deluſion, ariſing from the quick and ſudden ſuggeſtion of Fancy, which ſo cloſely connects the Idea of Diſtance with thoſe of

of Sight, that we are apt to think it is it ſelf a proper and immediate Object of that Senſe, till Reaſon corrects the Miſtake.

CXXVII. It having been ſhewn, that there are no abſtract Ideas of Figure, and that it is impoſſible for us, by any Preciſion of Thought, to frame an Idea of Extenſion ſeparate from all other viſible and tangible Qualities, which ſhall be common both to Sight and Touch: The Queſtion now remaining is, whether the particular Extenſions, Figures, and Motions perceived by Sight be of the ſame kind, with the particular Extenſions, Figures, and Motions perceived by Touch? In anſwer to which, I ſhall venture to lay down the following Propoſition: *The Extenſion, Figures, and Motions, perceived by Sight are ſpecifically diſtinct from the Ideas of Touch, called by the ſame Names, nor is there any ſuch thing as one Idea, or kind of Idea common to both Senſes.* This Propoſition may, without much Difficulty, be collected from what hath been ſaid in ſeveral Places of this Eſſay. But, becauſe it ſeems ſo remote from, and contrary to, the received Notions and ſettled Opinion of Man-

kind, I ſhall attempt to demonſtrate it more particularly, and at large, by the following Arguments.

CXXVIII. When upon Perception of an Idea, I range it under this or that ſort; it is becauſe it is perceived after the ſame manner, or becauſe it has a Likeneſs or Conformity with, or affects me in the ſame way as the Ideas of the ſort I rank it under. In ſhort, it muſt not be intirely new, but have ſomething in it old, and already perceived by me: It muſt, I ſay, have ſo much, at leaſt, in common with the Ideas I have before known and named, as to make me give it the ſame Name with them. But it has been, if I miſtake not, clearly made out, that a Man born blind would not at firſt Reception of his Sight, think the Things he ſaw were of the ſame Nature with the Objects of Touch, or had any thing in common with them; but that they were a new Set of Ideas, perceived in a new Manner, and intirely different from all he had ever perceived before: So that he would not call them by the ſame Name, nor repute them to be of the ſame Sort, with any thing he had hitherto known.

CXXIX.

CXXIX. *Secondly*, Light and Colours are allowed by all to conſtitute a ſort or Species intirely different from the Ideas of Touch: Nor will any Man, I preſume, ſay they can make themſelves perceived by that Senſe: But there is no other immediate Object of Sight, beſides Light and Colours. It is therefore a direct Conſequence, that there is no Idea common to both Senſes.

CXXX. It is a prevailing Opinion, even amongſt thoſe who have thought and writ moſt accurately concerning our Ideas, and the ways whereby they enter into the Underſtanding, that ſomething more is perceived by Sight, than barely Light and Colours with their Variations. Mr. *Locke* termeth Sight, 'The moſt comprehen-
'ſive of all our Senſes, conveying to our
'Minds the Ideas of Light and Colours,
'which are peculiar only to that Senſe;
'and alſo the fair different Ideas of Space,
'Figure, and Motion.' *Eſſay on Humane Underſtand.* B. ii. C. 9. S. 9. Space or Diſtance, we have ſhewn is not otherwiſe the Object of Sight than of Hearing. *vid.* Sect. XLVI. And as for Figure and Extenſion, I leave it to any one, that ſhall calmly attend to his own clear and diſtinct

Ideas, to decide whether he has any Idea intromitted immediately and properly by Sight, ſave only Light and Colours: Or whether it be poſſible for him, to frame in his Mind a diſtinct Abſtract Idea of Viſible Extenſion, or Figure, excluſive of all Colour: and on the other hand, whether he can conceive Colour without viſible Extenſion? For my own part, I muſt confeſs, I am not able to attain ſo great a nicety of Abſtraction: in a ſtrict Senſe, I ſee nothing but Light and Colours, with their ſeveral Shades and Variations. He who beſide theſe doth alſo perceive by Sight Ideas far different and diſtinct from them, hath that Faculty in a Degree more perfect and comprehenſive than I can pretend to. It muſt be owned, that by the Mediation of Light and Colours, other far different Ideas are ſuggeſted to my Mind: but ſo they are by Hearing, which beſide Sounds which are peculiar to that Senſe, doth by their Mediation ſuggeſt not only Space, Figure, and Motion, but alſo all other Ideas whatſoever that can be ſignified by Words.

CXXXI. *Thirdly*, It is, I think, an Axiom univerſally received, that Quantities of the ſame kind may be added together,

gether, and make one intire Sum. Mathematicians add Lines together: but they do not add a Line to a Solid, or conceive it as making one Sum with a Surface: Theſe three kinds of Quantity being thought incapable of any ſuch mutual Addition, and conſequently of being compared together, in the ſeveral ways of Proportion, are by them eſteemed intirely Diſparate and Heterogeneous. Now let any one try in his Thoughts to add a viſible Line or Surface to a tangible Line or Surface, ſo as to conceive them making one continued Sum or Whole. He that can do this, may think them Homogeneous: but he that cannot muſt, by the foregoing Axiom, think them Heterogeneous: A Blue, and a Red Line I can conceive added together into one Sum, and making one continued Line: but to make, in my Thoughts, one continued Line of a viſible and tangible Line added together is, I find, a Task far more difficult, and even inſurmountable: and I leave it to the Reflexion and Experience of every particular Perſon to determine for himſelf.

CXXXII. A farther Confirmation of our Tenet may be drawn from the Solu-

tion of Mr. *Molyneux*'s Problem, publiſhed by Mr. *Locke* in his Eſſay: Which I ſhall ſet down as it there lies, together with Mr. *Locke*'s Opinion of it, ‘ *Suppoſe a Man* ‘ *born Blind, and now Adult, and taught* ‘ *by his Touch to diſtinguiſh between a Cube,* ‘ *and a Sphere of the ſame Metal, and* ‘ *nighly of the ſame Bigneſs, ſo as to tell,* ‘ *when he felt one and t'other, which is* ‘ *the Cube, and which the Sphere. Sup-* ‘ *poſe then the Cube and Sphere placed on a* ‘ *Table, and the blind Man to be made to* ‘ *See:* Quære, *Whether by his Sight, be-* ‘ *fore he touched them, he could now diſtin-* ‘ *guiſh, and tell, which is the Globe, which* ‘ *the Cube?* To which the acute and judi- ‘ cious Propoſer anſwers: *Not. For though* ‘ *he has obtained the Experience of, how a* ‘ *Globe, how a Cube affects his Touch; yet* ‘ *he has not yet attained the Experience, that* ‘ *what affects his Touch ſo or ſo, muſt affect* ‘ *his Sight ſo or ſo: Or that a protuberant* ‘ *Angle in the Cube, that preſſed his Hand* ‘ *unequally, ſhall appear to his Eye, as it* ‘ *doth in the Cube.* I agree with this ‘ thinking Gentleman, whom I am proud ‘ to call my Friend, in his Anſwer to this ‘ his Problem; and am of opinion, that ‘ the blind Man, at firſt Sight would not ‘ be able with certainty to ſay, which was

'the Globe, which the Cube, whilſt he 'only ſaw them.' *Eſſay on Humane Underſtanding*, B. ii. C. 9. S. 8.

CXXXIII. Now, if a ſquare Surface perceived by Touch be of the ſame ſort with a ſquare Surface perceived by Sight; it is certain the blind Man here mentioned might know a ſquare Surface, as ſoon as he ſaw it: It is no more but introducing into his Mind, by a new Inlet, an Idea he has been already well acquainted with. Since therefore he is ſuppoſed to have known by his Touch, that a Cube is a Body terminated by ſquare Surfaces; and that a Sphere is not terminated by ſquare Surfaces: upon the ſuppoſition that a viſible and tangible Square differ only *in numero*, it follows, that he might know, by the unerring Mark of the ſquare Surfaces, which was the Cube, and which not, while he only ſaw them. We muſt therefore allow, either that viſible Extenſion and Figures are ſpecifically diſtinct from tangible Extenſion and Figures, or elſe, that the Solution of this Problem, given by thoſe two thoughtful and ingenious Men, is wrong.

CXXXIV.

CXXXIV. Much more might be laid together in Proof of the Propoſition I have advanced: but what has been ſaid is, if I miſtake not, ſufficient to convince any one that ſhall yield a reaſonable Attention: And, as for thoſe that will not be at the pains of a little Thought, no Multiplication of Words will ever ſuffice to make them underſtand the Truth, or rightly conceive my Meaning.

CXXXV. I cannot let go the abovementioned Problem, without ſome Reflexion on it. It hath been made evident, that a Man blind from his Birth would not, at firſt Sight, denominate any thing he ſaw, by the Names he had been uſed to appropriate to Ideas of Touch, *vid.* Sect. CVI. Cube, Sphere, Table, are Words he has known applied to Things perceivable by Touch, but to Things perfectly intangible he never knew them applied. Thoſe Words in their wonted Application, always marked out to his Mind Bodies, or ſolid Things which were perceived by the Reſiſtance they gave: But there is no Solidity, no Reſiſtance or Protruſion perceived by Sight. In ſhort, the Ideas of Sight are all new Perceptions, to which there be no Names annexed in his Mind:

Mind: he cannot, therefore underſtand what is ſaid to him concerning them: And to ask of the two Bodies he ſaw placed on the Table, which was the Sphere, which the Cube? were, to him, a Queſtion downright bantering and unintelligible; nothing he ſees being able to ſuggeſt to his Thoughts, the Idea of Body, Diſtance, or in general, of any thing he had already known.

CXXXVI. It is a Miſtake, to think the ſame thing affects both Sight and Touch. If the ſame Angle or Square, which is the Object of Touch, be alſo the Object of Viſion, what ſhould hinder the blind Man, at firſt Sight, from knowing it? For though the Manner wherein it affects the Sight, be different from that wherein it affected his Touch; yet, there being, beſide this Manner or Circumſtance, which is new and unknown, the Angle or Figure, which is old and known, he cannot chooſe but diſcern it.

CXXXVII. Viſible Figure and Extenſion having been demonſtrated to be of a nature, intirely different and heterogeneous from tangible Figure and Extenſion, it remains that we inquire concerning Motion.

Motion. Now that viſible Motion is not of the ſame ſort with tangible Motion, ſeems to need no farther Proof, it being an evident Corollary from what we have ſhewn concerning the Difference there is between viſible and tangible Extenſion: But for a more full and expreſs Proof hereof, we need only obſerve, that one who had not yet experienced Viſion, would not at firſt ſight know Motion. Whence it clearly follows, that Motion perceivable by Sight is of a ſort diſtinct from Motion perceivable by Touch. The Antecedent I prove thus: By Touch he could not perceive any Motion, but what was up or down, to the right or left, nearer or farther from him; beſides theſe, and their ſeveral Varieties or Complications, it is impoſſible he ſhould have any Idea of Motion. He would not therefore think any thing to be Motion, or give the name Motion to any Idea, which he could not range under ſome or other of thoſe particular kinds thereof. But from Sect. XCV. it is plain that by the meer act of Viſion, he could not know Motion upwards or downwards, to the right or left, or in any other poſſible Direction. From which I conclude, he would not know Motion at all at firſt ſight. As for the

Idea

Idea of Motion in Abſtract, I ſhall not waſte Paper about it, but leave it to my Reader, to make the beſt he can of it. To me it is perfectly unintelligible.

CXXXVIII. The Conſideration of Motion may furniſh a new Field for Inquiry: But ſince the Manner wherein the Mind apprehends by Sight, the Motion of tangible Objects, with the various Degrees thereof, may be eaſily collected, from what hath been ſaid concerning the Manner, wherein that Senſe doth ſuggeſt their various Diſtances, Magnitudes and Situations; I ſhall not enlarge any farther on this Subject, but proceed to conſider what may be alledged with greateſt appearance of Reaſon, againſt the Propoſition we have ſhewn to be true: For where there is ſo much Prejudice to be encountered, a bare and naked Demonſtration of the Truth will ſcarce ſuffice. We muſt alſo ſatisfy the Scruples that Men may raiſe in favour of their preconceived Notions, ſhew whence the Miſtake ariſes, how it came to ſpread, and carefully diſcloſe and root out thoſe falſe Perſuaſions, that an early Prejudice might have implanted in the Mind.

CXXXIX.

CXXXIX. *Firſt*, Therefore, it will be demanded, how viſible Extenſion and Figures come to be called by the ſame Name, with tangible Extenſion and Figures, if they are not of the ſame kind with them? It muſt be ſomething more than Humour or Accident, that could occaſion a Cuſtom ſo conſtant and univerſal as this, which has obtained in all Ages and Nations of the World, and amongſt all Ranks of Men, the Learned as well as the Illiterate.

CXL. To which I anſwer, we can no more argue a viſible and tangible Square to be of the ſame Species, from their being called by the ſame Name, than we can, that a tangible Square and the Monoſyllable conſiſting of ſix Letters, whereby it is marked, are of the ſame Species becauſe they are both called by the ſame Name. It is cuſtomary to call written Words, and the Things they ſignify, by the ſame Name: For Words not being regarded in their own Nature, or otherwiſe than as they are Marks of Things, it had been ſuperfluous, and beſide the deſign of Language, to have given them Names diſtinct from thoſe of the Things marked by them. The ſame Reaſon holds here

here alſo. Viſible Figures are the Marks of tangible Figures, and from SECT. LIX. it is plain, that in themſelves they are little regarded, or upon any other Score than for their Connexion with tangible Figures, which by Nature they are ordained to ſignify. And becauſe this Language of Nature doth not vary in different Ages or Nations, hence it is, that in all Times and Places, viſible Figures are called by the ſame Names, as the reſpective tangible Figures ſuggeſted by them, and not becauſe they are alike, or of the ſame ſort with them.

CXLI. But, ſay you, ſurely a tangible Square is liker to a viſible Square, than to a viſible Circle: It has four Angles, and as many Sides: ſo alſo has the viſible Square: but the viſible Circle has no ſuch thing, being bounded by one uniform Curve, without right Lines or Angles, which makes it unfit to repreſent the tangible Square, but very fit to repreſent the tangible Circle. Whence it clearly follows, that viſible Figures are Patterns of, or of the ſame Species with the reſpective tangible Figures repreſented by them: that they are like unto them, and of their own Nature fitted to repreſent them, as being

being of the ſame ſort: and that they are in no reſpect arbitrary Signs, as Words.

CXLII. I anſwer, it muſt be acknowledged, the viſible Square is fitter than the viſible Circle, to repreſent the tangible Square, but then it is not becauſe it is liker, or more of a Species with it; but becauſe the viſible Square contains in it ſeveral diſtinct Parts, whereby to mark the ſeveral diſtinct, correſponding Parts of a tangible Square, whereas the viſible Circle doth not. The Square perceived by Touch, hath four diſtinct, equal Sides, ſo alſo hath it four diſtinct, equal Angles. It is therefore neceſſary, that the viſible Figure which ſhall be moſt proper to mark it, contain four diſtinct equal Parts correſponding to the four Sides of the tangible Square; as likewiſe four other diſtinct and equal Parts, whereby to denote the four equal Angles of the tangible Square. And accordingly we ſee the viſible Figures contain in them diſtinct viſible Parts, anſwering to the diſtinct tangible Parts of the Figures ſignified, or ſuggeſted by them.

CXLIII. But it will not hence follow, that any viſible Figure is like unto, or of the

the ſame Species with its correſponding tangible Figure, unleſs it be alſo ſhewn, that not only the Number, but alſo the Kind of the Parts be the ſame in both. To illuſtrate this, I obſerve that viſible Figures repreſent tangible Figures, much after the ſame manner that written Words do Sounds. Now, in this reſpect, Words are not arbitrary, it not being indifferent, what written Word ſtands for any Sound: But it is requiſite, that each Word contain in it ſo many diſtinct Characters, as there are Variations in the Sound it ſtands for. Thus the ſingle Letter *a* is proper to mark one ſimple uniform Sound; and the word *Adultery* is accommodated to repreſent the Sound annexed to it, in the Formation whereof, there being eight different Colliſions, or Modifications of the Air by the Organs of Speech, each of which produces a difference of Sound, it was fit the Word repreſenting it ſhould conſiſt of as many diſtinct Characters, thereby to mark each particular Difference or Part of the whole Sound: And yet no Body, I preſume, will ſay, the ſingle Letter *a*, or the Word *Adultery* are like unto, or of the ſame Species with the reſpective Sounds by them repreſented. It is indeed arbitrary that, in

general, Letters of any Language repreſent Sounds at all: but when that is once agreed, it is not arbitrary what Combination of Letters ſhall repreſent this or that particular Sound. I leave this with the Reader to purſue, and apply it in his own Thoughts.

CXLIV. It muſt be confeſſed that we are not ſo apt to confound other Signs with the Things ſignified, or to think them of the ſame Species, as we are viſible and tangible Ideas. But a little Conſideration will ſhew us how this may be, without our ſuppoſing them of a like Nature. Theſe Signs are conſtant and univerſal, their Connexion with tangible Ideas has been learnt at our firſt Entrance into the World; and ever ſince, almoſt every Moment of our Lives, it has been occurring to our Thoughts, and faſtening and ſtriking deeper on our Minds. When we obſerve that Signs are variable, and of Humane Inſtitution; when we remember, there was a time they were not connected in our Minds, with thoſe things they now ſo readily ſuggeſt; but that their Signification was learned by the ſlow Steps of Experience: This preſerves us from confounding

ſounding them. But when we find the ſame Signs ſuggeſt the ſame Things all over the World; when we know they are not of Humane Inſtitution, and cannot remember that we ever learned their Signification, but think that at firſt Sight they would have ſuggeſted to us the ſame Things they do now: All this perſuades us they are of the ſame Species as the Things reſpectively repreſented by them, and that it is by a natural Reſemblance they ſuggeſt them to our Minds.

CXLV. Add to this, that whenever we make a nice Survey of any Object, ſucceſſively directing the Optic Axis to each Point thereof; there are certain Lines and Figures deſcribed by the Motion of the Head or Eye, which being in truth perceived by feeling, do nevertheleſs ſo mix themſelves as it were, with the Ideas of Sight, that we can ſcarce think but they appertain to that Senſe. Again, the Ideas of Sight enter into the Mind, ſeveral at once more diſtinct and unmingled, than is uſual in the other Senſes beſide the Touch. Sounds, for example, perceived at the ſame Inſtant, are apt to coaleſce, if I may ſo ſay, into one Sound: But we can perceive at the ſame time great va-

riety of visible Objects, very separate and distinct from each other. Now tangible Extension being made up of several distinct coexistent parts, we may hence gather another Reason, that may dispose us to imagine a Likeness or Analogy between the immediate Objects of Sight and Touch. But nothing, certainly, doth more contribute to blend and confound them together, than the strict and close Connexion they have with each other. We cannot open our Eyes, but the Ideas of Distance, Bodies, and tangible Figures are suggested by them. So swift and sudden, and unperceived is the Transition from visible to tangible Ideas, that we can scarce forbear thinking them equally the immediate Object of Vision.

CXLVI. The Prejudice, which is grounded on these, and whatever other Causes may be assigned thereof, sticks so fast, that it is impossible without obstinate Striving, and Labour of the Mind, to get intirely clear of it. But then the Reluctancy we find, in rejecting any Opinion, can be no Argument of its Truth, to whoever considers what has been already shewn, with regard to the

Prejudices we entertain concerning the Diſtance, Magnitude, and Situation of Objects; Prejudices ſo familiar to our Minds, ſo confirmed and inveterate, as they will hardly give way to the cleareſt Demonſtration.

CXLVII. Upon the whole, I think we may fairly conclude, that the proper Objects of Viſion conſtitute an univerſal Language of the Author of Nature, whereby we are inſtructed how to regulate our Actions, in order to attain thoſe things, that are neceſſary to the Preſervation and Well-being of our Bodies, as alſo to avoid whatever may be hurtful and deſtructive of them. It is by their Information that we are principally guided in all the Tranſactions and Concerns of Life. And the manner wherein they ſignify, and mark unto us the Objects which are at a Diſtance, is the ſame with that of Languages and Signs of Humane Appointment; which do not ſuggeſt the things ſignified, by any Likeneſs or Identity of Nature, but only by an habitual Connexion, that Experience has made us to obſerve between them.

CXLVIII. Suppoſe one who had always continued Blind, be told by his Guide, that after he has advanced ſo many Steps, he ſhall come to the Brink of a Precipice, or be ſtopt by a Wall; muſt not this to him ſeem very admirable and ſurprizing? He cannot conceive how it is poſſible for Mortals to frame ſuch Predictions as theſe, which to him would ſeem as ſtrange and unaccountable, as Propheſy doth to others. Even they who are bleſſed with the viſive Faculty, may (though Familiarity make it leſs obſerved) find therein ſufficient Cauſe of Admiration. The wonderful Art and Contrivance wherewith it is adjuſted to thoſe Ends and Purpoſes for which it was apparently deſigned, the vaſt Extent, Number, and Variety of Objects that are at once with ſo much Eaſe, and Quickneſs, and Pleaſure ſuggeſted by it: All theſe afford Subject for much and pleaſing Speculation, and may, if any thing, give us ſome Glimmering, analogous Prænotion of Things, which are placed beyond the certain Diſcovery and Comprehenſion of our preſent State.

CXLIX. I do not deſign to trouble my ſelf with drawing Corollaries, from the Doctrine

Doctrine I have hitherto laid down. If it bears the Teſt, others may, ſo far as they ſhall think convenient, employ their Thoughts in extending it farther, and applying it to whatever Purpoſes it may be ſubſervient to: Only, I cannot forbear making ſome Inquiry concerning the Object of Geometry, which the Subject we have been upon doth naturally lead one to. We have ſhewn there is no ſuch Idea as that of Extenſion in Abſtract, and that there are two kinds of ſenſible Extenſion and Figures, which are intirely diſtinct and heterogeneous from each other. Now, it is natural to inquire which of theſe is the Object of Geometry.

CL. Some things there are, which at firſt ſight incline one to think Geometry converſant about viſible Extenſion. The conſtant Uſe of the Eyes, both in the practical and ſpeculative Parts of that Science doth very much induce us thereto. It would, without doubt, ſeem odd to a Mathematician to go about to convince him, the Diagrams he ſaw upon Paper were not the Figures, or even the Likeneſs of the Figures, which make the Subject of the Demonſtration. The con-

trary being held an unqueſtionable Truth, not anly by Mathematicians, but alſo by thoſe who apply themſelves more particularly to the Study of Logick; I mean, who conſider the Nature of Science, Certainty, and Demonſtration: It being by them aſſigned as one Reaſon, of the extraordinary Clearneſs and Evidence of Geometry, that in this Science the Reaſonings are free from thoſe Inconveniences, which attend the Uſe of arbitrary Signs, the very Ideas themſelves being copied out, and expoſed to View upon Paper. But, by the bye, how well this agrees with what they likewiſe aſſert of abſtract Ideas, being the Object of Geometrical Demonſtration, I leave to be conſidered.

CLI. To come to a Reſolution in this Point, we need only obſerve what hath been ſaid in SECT. LIX. LX. LXI. where it is ſhewn that viſible Extenſions in themſelves are little regarded, and have no ſettled determinate Greatneſs, and that Men meaſure altogether, by the Application of tangible Extenſion to tangible Extenſion. All which makes it evident, that viſible Extenſion and Figures are not the Object of Geometry.

CLI.

CLII. It is therefore plain that visible Figures are of the same Use in Geometry, that Words are: and the one may as well be accounted the Object of that Science, as the other; neither of them being otherwise concerned therein, than as they represent or suggest to the Mind the particular tangible Figures connected with them. There is indeed this Difference between the Signification of tangible Figures by visible Figures, and of Ideas by Words: That whereas the latter is variable and uncertain, depending altogether on the arbitrary Appointment of Men, the former is fixed, and immutably the same in all Times and Places. A visible Square, for Instance, suggests to the Mind the same tangible Figure in *Europe*, that it doth in *America*. Hence it is that the Voice of the Author of Nature, which speaks to our Eyes, is not liable to that Misinterpretation and Ambiguity, that Languages of Humane Contrivance are unavoidably subject to.

CLIII. Though what has been said may suffice to shew what ought to be determined, with relation to the Object of Geometry; I shall nevertheless, for the fuller Illustration

tion thereof, consider the Case of an Intelligence, or unbodied Spirit, which is supposed to see perfectly well, *i. e.* to have a clear Perception of the proper and immediate Objects of Sight, but to have no Sense of Touch. Whether there be any such Being in Nature or no, is beside my purpose to inquire. It sufficeth, that the Supposition contains no Contradiction in it. Let us now examine, what Proficiency such a one may be able to make in Geometry. Which Speculation will lead us more clearly to see, whether the Ideas of Sight can possibly be the Object of that Science.

CLIV. *First*, then it is certain, the aforesaid Intelligence could have no Idea of a Solid, or Quantity of three Dimensions, which followeth from its not having any Idea of Distance. We indeed are prone to think, that we have by Sight the Ideas of Space and Solids, which ariseth from our imagining that we do, strictly speaking, see Distance, and some Parts of an Object at a greater Distance than others; which hath been demonstrated to be the Effect of the Experience we have had, what Ideas of Touch are connected with such and such

Ideas

Ideas attending Viſion: But the Intelligence here ſpoken of is ſuppoſed to have no Experience of Touch. He would not, therefore, judge as we do, nor have any Idea of Diſtance, Outneſs, or Profundity, nor conſequently of Space or Body, either immediately or by Suggeſtion. Whence it is plain he can have no Notion of thoſe Parts of Geometry, which relate to the Menſuration of Solids, and their convex or concave Surfaces, and contemplate the Properties of Lines generated by the Section of a Solid. The conceiving of any Part whereof, is beyond the Reach of his Faculties.

CLV. Farther, he cannot comprehend the Manner wherein Geometers deſcribe a right Line or Circle; the Rule and Compaſs with their Uſe, being things of which it is impoſſible he ſhould have any Notion: Nor is it an eaſier matter for him to conceive the placing of one Plain or Angle on another, in order to prove their Equality: Since that ſuppoſeth ſome Idea of Diſtance, or external Space. All which makes it evident, our pure Intelligence could never attain to know ſo much as the firſt Elements of plain Geometry.

And

And perhaps, upon a nice Inquiry, it will be found, he cannot even have an Idea of plain Figures any more than he can of Solids; ſince ſome Idea of Diſtance is neceſſary, to form the Idea of a Geometrical Plain, as will appear to whoever ſhall reflect a little on it.

CLVI. All that is properly perceived by the viſive Faculty, amounts to no more than Colours with their Variations, and different Proportions of Light and Shade: But, the perpetual Mutability, and Fleetingneſs of thoſe immediate Objects of Sight, render them incapable of being managed after the manner of Geometrical Figures; nor is it in any Degree uſeful that they ſhould. It is true, there are divers of them perceived at once; and more of ſome, and leſs of others: But accurately to compute their Magnitude, and aſſign preciſe determinate Proportions, between things ſo variable and inconſtant, if we ſuppoſe it poſſible to be done, muſt yet be a very trifling and inſignificant Labour.

CLVII. I muſt confeſs, Men are tempted to think that flat or plain Figures are immediate

immediate Objects of Sight, though they acknowledge Solids are not. And this Opinion is grounded on what is obſerved in painting, wherein (it ſeems) the Ideas immediately imprinted on the Mind, are only of Plains variouſly coloured, which by a ſudden Act of the Judgment are changed into Solids: But, with a little Attention we ſhall find the Plains here mentioned, as the immediate Objects of Sight, are not viſible but tangible Plains. For when we ſay that Pictures are Plains: we mean thereby, that they appear to the Touch ſmooth and uniform. But then this Smoothneſs and Uniformity, or, in other Words, this Plainneſs of the Picture, is not perceived immediately by Viſion: For it appeareth to the Eye various and multiform.

CLVIII. From all which we may conclude, that Plains are no more the immediate Object of Sight than Solids. What we ſtrictly ſee are not Solids, nor yet Plains variouſly coloured: they are only diverſity of Colours. And ſome of theſe ſuggeſt to the Mind Solids, and others plain Figures; juſt as they have been experienced to be connected with the one, or the

the other: So that we ſee Plains, in the ſame way that we ſee Solids; both being equally ſuggeſted by the immediate Objects of Sight, which accordingly are themſelves denominated Plains and Solids: But though they are called by the ſame Names, with the things marked by them, they are nevertheleſs of a Nature intirely different, as hath been demonſtrated.

CLIX. What hath been ſaid is, if I miſtake not, ſufficient to decide the Queſtion we propoſed to examine, concerning the Ability of a pure Spirit, ſuch as we have deſcribed, to know *Geometry:* It is, indeed, no eaſy Matter for us to enter preciſely into the Thoughts of ſuch an Intelligence; becauſe we cannot, without great Pains, cleverly ſeparate and diſintangle in our Thoughts the proper Objects of Sight from thoſe of Touch which are connected with them. This, indeed, in a compleat Degree, ſeems ſcarce poſſible to be performed: Which will not ſeem ſtrange to us, if we conſider how hard it is, for any one to hear the Words of his Native Language pronounced in his Ears without underſtanding them. Though he endeavour to diſunite the Meaning from the

the Sound, it will nevertheleſs intrude into his Thoughts, and he ſhall find it extreme difficult, if not impoſſible, to put himſelf exactly in the Poſture of a Foreigner, that never learned the Language, ſo as to be affected barely with the Sounds themſelves, and not perceive the Signification annexed to them. By this time, I ſuppoſe, it is clear that neither Abſtract, nor viſible Extenſion makes the Object of Geometry; the not diſcerning of which may perhaps, have created ſome Difficulty and uſeleſs Labour in Mathematics.

FINIS.

Josephus does not mention
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. This
accounted for. O. 98 &c